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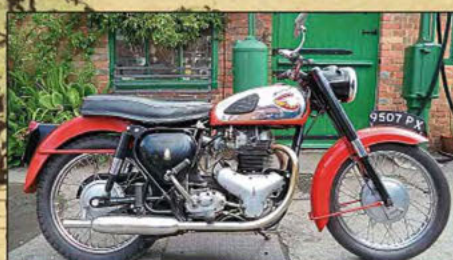
1938 Velocette 250cc MOV



1950 Vincent 500cc Comet



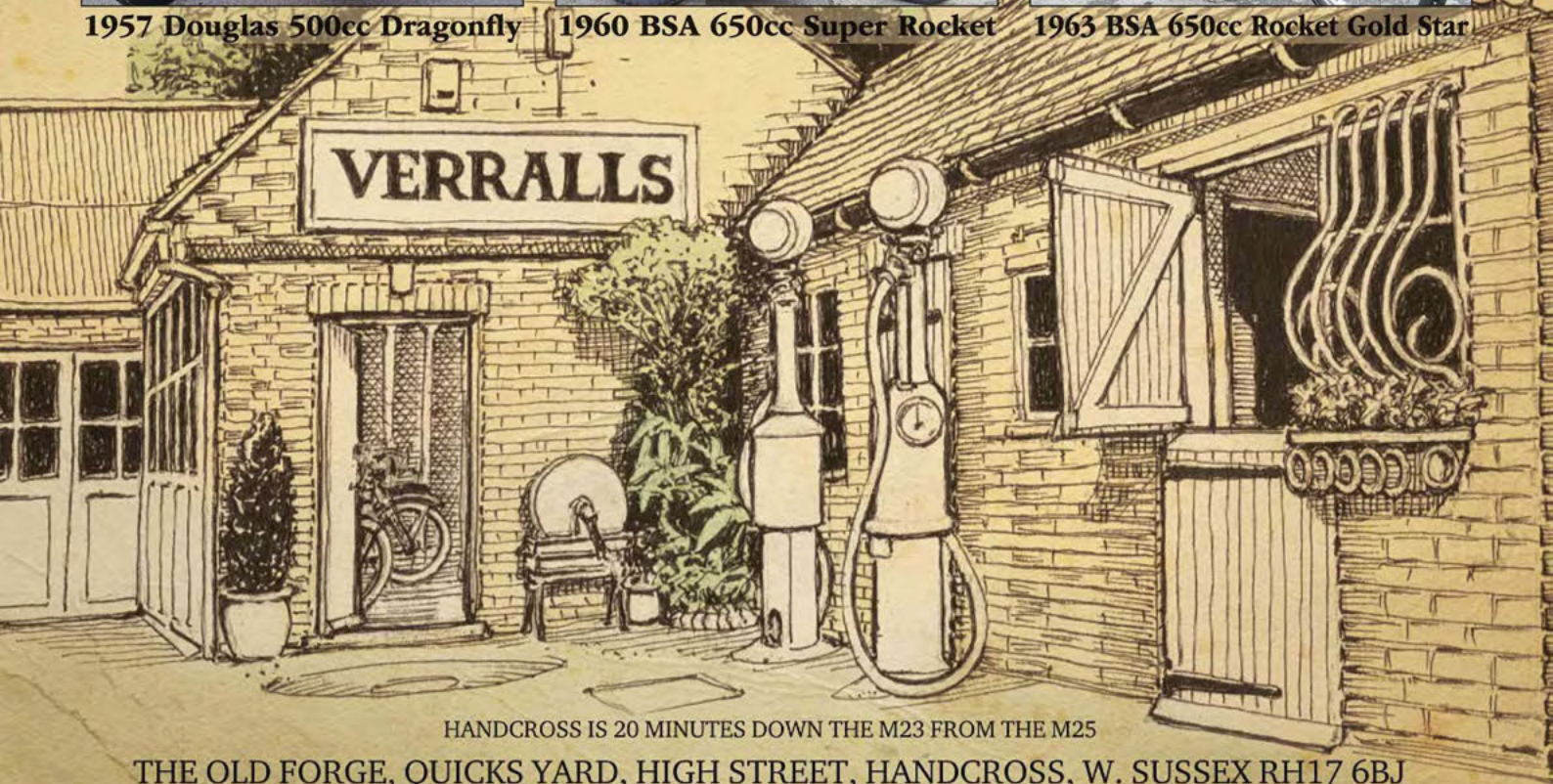
1957 Douglas 500cc Dragonfly



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# Editor's welcome

Welcome to the first issue of a new calendar year, so season's best wishes are extended to one and all. Despite the year drawing towards its close, there's still plenty going on in the classic world, while it's already time to start formulating next year's plans.

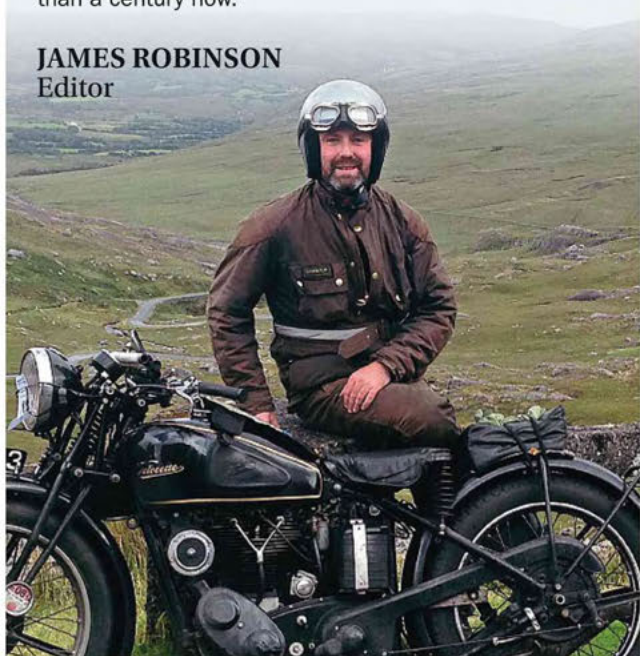
I always favour a big wall planner (the one given away with our sister title *Scootering* has served the purpose for me the last few years) onto which I first detail all magazine deadline dates. Next, I transcribe everything that I know will be happening and which I'll definitely go to circumstance allowing – so on go the Stafford shows, Bristol show, Banbury, Pioneer Run, Morini track day at Cadwell, the Irish rally. Then the things I hope to/would like to go to, that's – for example – all the Lansdowne race dates, Kop Hill Climb, Founders Day, Graham Walker Run, Garden of England Run, Dijon, Goodwood (Festival of Speed and Revival), the ASI MotoShow and sundry others, like local club runs and not-so-local runs, too. Quite soon it starts to fill up...

Next, it's a case of trying to decide what motorcycles need to be ready for which event, what I'd like to take 'ideally' and what back-up plans I need to start formulating sooner rather than later, as I know things will invariably not go as hoped for. And so a plan starts to formulate.

This year, the vast majority of my 'classic' riding has been on pre Second World War machines, while I'm finding I'm ever more drawn to the early vintage and veteran period, so it's a case of trying to decide how best to scratch that particular itch. I have grandiose plans of doing lots of runs and rides on a single-speed veteran which I neither a) own or b) possess the necessary skills (and time) to master, so I have to reign in my enthusiasm and start to think a bit more practically. Not a lot more practically, you'll understand ('practical' would be a new GS BMW or similar for touring, for example) but at least something that'll give me a fighting chance of turning up for runs and such with at least a vague idea of what I'm doing.

I've long had this notion of using something that is over/at least 100 years old on a variety of events but perhaps not 2016... though we'll see! Talking of 100 years ago, we've the first part of our social history of motorcycling in this issue too – though that covers more than a century now.

**JAMES ROBINSON**  
Editor



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PAGE 16



## Contributors

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Martin Squires, Jerry Thurston, Alan Turner.

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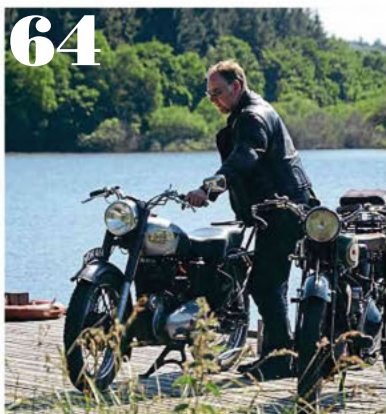
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# The merry march of the tuttimen

This was the scene in Hungerford in late April 1922, when residents took to the streets to celebrate Hocktide – an ancient festival that takes place just after Easter. Hocktide is still celebrated in the town today.

Words: MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH Photography: MORTONS MEDIA ARCHIVE



**L**ike the native inhabitants of so many other countries, the British are sticklers for tradition. Hocktide traditionally took place on the second Tuesday after Easter but today survives only in Hungerford. It encompassed many unusual rituals, one of which is being displayed in this photograph. The long staff adorned at one end with flowers and (as tradition dictates) a cloven orange, is known as a 'tutti pole'. It is believed that these poles have their origins in pungent floral arrangements called nosegays that were displayed in the more seamy areas of medieval towns to help alleviate the smell!

On the morning of the first day of the festival, the Hocktide Council – also known as the Hocktide Court – convenes to elect the officers for the year. These are the chief constable, officers of the town and the 'tuttimen'. The latter group of gentlemen are the ones that carry the tutti poles – more as a symbol of their status than to mitigate any offensive pongs – and they can then make a tour of the town collecting kisses from all the girls they should happen to meet during the time that the Hocktide festival is in full swing. The tuttimen give the girls an orange as payment and, as you can see, the unfortunate passenger of the Douglas sidecar outfit is being given a rather forceful kiss by once such tuttiman. She doesn't look best pleased.

Hocktide was widely celebrated in England up until the 16th century, when its popularity began to slowly wane. Traditions also changed throughout the years. In the 19th century there were

many strange rites taking place; on the Monday the men of the village would tie up the women and demand a kiss for their release, and on the Tuesday (which was the actual Hock-day) the men would reap the rewards of their insalubrious conduct by being tied up by the women, who would demand payment for their release. This time, however, the payment was monetary, and would often go to a local charitable cause.

Returning now to the concern of this publication, the Douglas itself is one its famous fore-and-aft twin models – an early vintage, by today's standards. It is the 4hp-engined model, as opposed to its sibling of 2½hp, and is most likely from the previous year's roster of motorcycles. These machines were popular for their pulling power, making them a good choice as 'sidecar sloggers', as is being exemplified here.

The Douglas fore-and-aft twin was one of the company's most successful early designs, and one that the War Office earmarked as a machine that was capable of surviving the rigours of Europe in wartime. Predecessors of the machine pictured here were battling through the mud of the Somme only eight years before this photograph was taken, so the Douglas twin was made to be durable. Granted, the unforgiving terrain and harsh conditions did cause the occasional hiccup (the Douglas could often find itself running on one cylinder if conditions were abysmally wet and the front plug shorted out) but it ran well and proved to be a stalwart companion both in and out of wartime.

End



# News & Events

EDITED BY JAMES ROBINSON

## Changes due at Gaydon museum

The Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon, home to the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust and also the VMCC's Banbury Run, has announced various changes.

The world's largest collection of historic British cars will be called the British Motor Museum, and undertaking a major refurbishment this winter, as well as unveiling a new £4m Collections Centre. The venue will be closed until February 2016. There's more at [britishmotormuseum.co.uk](http://britishmotormuseum.co.uk)

## ELK calendar

ELK has announced its calendar for 2016:

- **March 28**, Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show & Bikejumble, Ashford, Kent
- **April 3**, South of England Classic Show & Bikejumble, Ardingly, Sussex
- **May 1**, Romney Marsh Bikejumble, Hamstreet, Kent
- **May 14-15**, Festival of Motorcycling, East of England Showground, Peterborough
- **June 26**, Romney Marsh Bikejumble, Hamstreet, Kent
- **July 24**, South of England Summer Classic Show & Bikejumble, Ardingly, Sussex
- **September 18**, Romney Marsh Bikejumble, Hamstreet, Kent
- **October 23**, South of England Classic Show & Bikejumble, Ardingly, Sussex

## CBG Winter Classic

A kick-start to the new classic motorcycling year, the Carole Nash *Classic Bike Guide* Winter Classic, returns on January 9-10, 2016, for a fifth instalment.

Hundreds of trade stands and autojumble plots will pack into the halls of Newark Showground for the two-day exhibition.

Club stands and private entrants will also be displaying pristine restored and maintained classic machines.

Alongside the classic elements, British Superbike and TT rider Peter Hickman will be in attendance, chatting on stage with compere Steve Plater about his racing career.

Adding something a little different to proceedings will be the return of Scooter World, over two scooter halls.

Doors open at 9am both days and advance tickets are available from 01507 529529.



## Spanish success

The 4th Colombres International Rally, run by the Moto Club Indianos, which took place October 5-11, 2015, was another outstanding success and incorporated all the old favourites, such as the traditional Saturday Bustio-Colombres hill climb run along with the two-day autojumble run at the village hall.

It also included the second running of the classic motocross on the Sunday, along with a special event for small children.

There is no doubt that the Moto Club Indianos is intent on building up the event to become a must visit for the classic enthusiast, but also determined to not fall into the

previous trap of expanding to the point where it becomes a problem due to size, so it has capped the number attending and is strict on the age of machines entering. To take part you need to watch the website [www.motoclubindianos.com](http://www.motoclubindianos.com) for details of the 2016 event and get your entry in quick.

Ian Kerr

## Vincent twin's lucky winner

The National Motorcycle Museum's summer 2015 raffle to win a 1947 Vincent Rapide was drawn by road racing superstars Carl Fogarty, Jamie Whitham and Phil Read at the Museum LIVE open day on October 31.

The first prize of the 1947 Vincent Rapide 998cc built to Black Shadow specification by the museum was won by Philip Tingle, of South Yorkshire.

The 1965 BSA Bantam D7 175cc motorcycle offered as a second prize was won by Andrew Gubb, from north Devon, while the third prize of a luxury 'classic' weekend hotel break for two was claimed by Mr P Brackenbury from the Isle of Wight.



First prize in the draw. Philip Tingle collects his bounty.



# Desne Dodkin (1927-2015)

Desne Dodkin, the former Veloce employee and wife of well-known Velocette dealer Geoff, passed away on September 16.

Born in Birmingham in 1927, Desne started work in the general office at the Velocette factory around 1947, later becoming secretary to Percy, Eugene, Peter and Bertie Goodman. At one time she was running the general office as well.

It was at Velocette that Desne met Geoff, who'd travel to the factory from his Velocette dealership in East Sheen. After the Velo factory closed in 1971, Desne, with service manager Bill Sewell, went to work for Matt Holder, who had bought the Velocette name and spares.

In 1972, Desne and Geoff married and she moved down to East Sheen to help him run his



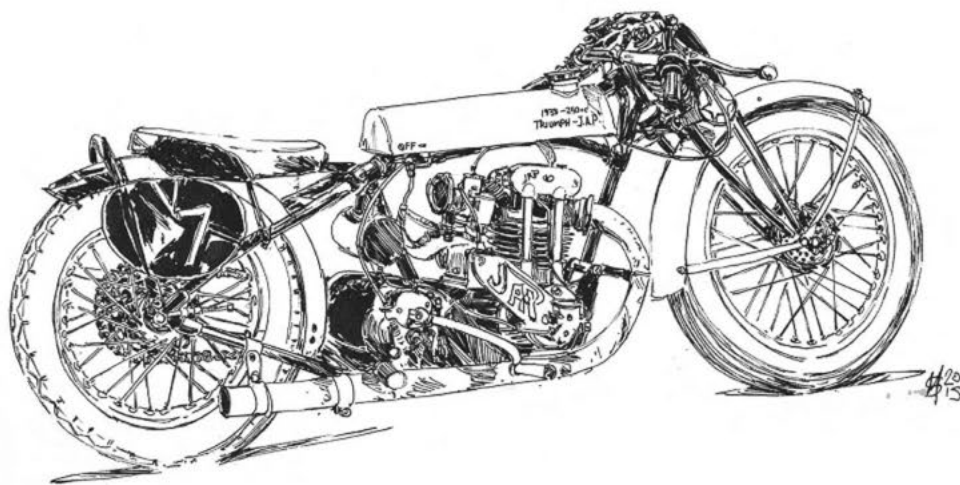
**Desne and Geoff Dodkin pose with Dennis Frost's Mk.1 KTT Velocette (Dennis Frost).**

shop. Geoff and Desne ran the business together for 20 years until 1992, before 23 years of happy retirement in the village

they'd moved to near Evesham, with Desne looking after the garden, the house and Geoff.

**Richard Adams**

## Martin Squires Sketchbook Selections Vol 6: Motorcycle Specials



Featuring 40 motorcycle specials from TT racers through to twin engine sprint bikes, sketched at various events and locations over the last 12 months, Martin Squires' new Sketchbook is available now.

Martin has been continually drawn to unusual motorcycles, especially racing and sprinting

machines, due to their built-for-purpose aesthetics. Some of the motorcycles in his new collection include a 1935 Velocette KTT MkV, a 1912 Rudge racer, a Hartley Ariel, Brian Chapman's Mighty Mouse and Super Mouse, an AJS V-twin record breaker and a 1928 Rudge Dirt Track Special.

The book's dimensions are 21cm x 14cm and each is signed and numbered as an edition of 100. The cost is £10 (+£3 p&p) and it is available from the shop section of [www.sketchbooktravels.com](http://www.sketchbooktravels.com) or by contacting Martin on 07973915139. He also takes private commissions.

## Bonhams French sale

For the very first time, the world-renowned MC Collection Motorcycle Museum will offer 18 of its highly desirable collectors' motorcycles at auction.

The Italian machines will be sold by Bonhams at the Grand Palais Sale, taking place on February 4, 2016 in Paris, France.

The Stockholm-based museum was founded in 1999 by enthusiast Christer R Christensson, who, together with motorcycle historian Ove Johansson, assembled a world-class collection of motorcycle masterpieces.

"This is the first time the museum has offered any of its collection at auction," said Ben Walker, international director for Bonhams Collectors' Motorcycles.

"It is an exciting, early consignment to our Grand Palais Sale, including several lots at no reserve."

Highlights include a 1954 MV Agusta Disco Volante, estimated at €11,000-17,000, and a 1948 Gilera Saturno, estimated at €11,000-16,000.



## Auto Retro

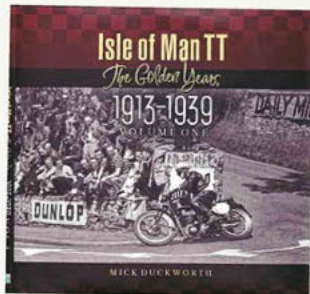
The 32nd Auto Retro Barcelona opening takes place on December 4-7, 2015. It will be in Hall eight of Fira de Barcelona's Montjuïc Fairgrounds with around 300 exhibitors from 10 countries expected.



# Book Review

## Isle of Man TT – The Golden Years 1913-1939 Volume One

**AUTHOR:** Mick Duckworth  
**PUBLISHED BY:** Lily Publications Ltd, PO Box 33, Ramsey, Isle of Man IM99 4LP  
**FAX:** +44 (0)1624 898 446  
**WEB:** www.lilypublications.co.uk  
 Hardback, 210 x 205mm (landscape); 95 pages with over 110 photographs and illustrations.  
**ISBN** 978-1-907945-48-9 **£16**



The Isle of Man TT races have a longer continuous history than any of the world's other great motorsport events.

First run in 1907, the Tourist Trophy started out as a test for production motorcycles that would encourage makers to improve performance and reliability. The Island's government was already willing to close public roads for car races, including the RAC's Tourist Trophy. In 1911 the motorcycle TT races moved to the now-legendary Mountain Course, running through the scenic splendour of the Manx hills.

At first it followed a circuit already used for car racing, but in 1920, when TT racing resumed after World War One, the present 37.73 mile course was adopted.

The photographs in this book (drawn from the Manx photographer Keig's archive), spanning the years from 1913 to 1939 with a gap from 1928-1931, present a superb record of greater and lesser TT races with machines that developed hugely over the years.

Perhaps inevitably, the 'Tourist' concepts of competing with standard production motorcycles were soon left behind as manufacturers vied for the prestige of TT success. The spindly bicycle-like machines of the early years can be seen to develop into specialised road racers with large fuel tanks, a liberal use of light alloy and larger brakes.

Riding kit evolved from a miscellany of protective clothing to purpose-made suits of strong hide, while the photos offer an insight into social history. Bystanders, in the quaint-looking clothing of the day, add charm to many of the images and schoolboys packing the paddock for autographs, loved to get in the picture with their TT heroes.

A lack of brilliant sunshine in many of the paddock shots doesn't necessarily reflect the Isle of Man's climate. Before the Second World War almost all practice sessions took place in the early morning, the first evening sessions being introduced in 1937.

We see emotive pictures of rare and early machines and riders – Oliver Godfrey, the 1911 Senior winner, having dead-heated for second place in the 1914 Senior on his V-twin Indian. Sadly, he lost his life while serving in the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War; Bert Le Vack on his fabulous 1923 DOHC New Imperial; a young Phillip Vincent poses apprehensively before the 1936 Senior with rider Jock West, seated on the works racing Series A Comet; Stanley Woods on 'The Roarer', the 1939 supercharged Velocette twin and George Rowley (wrongly captioned as team-mate Bob Foster), on the AJS supercharged V-four. An excellent book. I look forward to Volume Two.

**Book reviewed by  
Jonathan Hill**



The popular appeal of Norton's Manx showed no sign of diminishing at Ardingly.

## Redman stars at *RealClassic*

ELK Promotions' final event of the year was the *RealClassic* Show at the familiar Ardingly showground venue, on October 25, 2015.

The special guest was the ever-popular Jim Redman, who had a very busy day, willingly signing autographs and posing for photos.

The show included a special class for Manx Nortons, inspired by Ardingly regular and arch-Bracebridge Street enthusiast Steve Elston. It

attracted some bikes with interesting provenance. John Rollison's 500cc model was judged the best of the bunch and his had been raced by Stan Woods and Charlie Sanby.

Among the other prize winner was Brian Moore's 1949 Triumph TR5 (Best pre-1950) and Tony King's 1937 HRD TT Replica, chosen as best competition.

The Best Club Stand went to the BSA Bantam Club.

**Alan Turner**

## Miller Museum opening times

As from Monday, November 30, the Sammy Miller Museum will be closed during the week but open at weekends until fully opening again on Monday, February 15, 2016, seven days a

week, for the 2016 season.

Over Christmas the museum will be closed on the weekend of December 26/27 but will be open on Friday, January 1, 2016, if you fancy a New Year's Day ride out!



## THE WAY WE WERE IN JANUARY

### 1916

After lengthy conversations with Mr G Funck of Coventry, progress was reported involving the development of aluminium cylinders, a new and interesting method of constructing a very light engine. Mr Funck was working on an all-aluminium cylinder devoid of a liner. To minimise wear, he'd experimented with contractile rings fitted to a light steel shell-type piston. Other lines of development included a water-cooled engine with grooved pistons without rings.

Mr Funck postulated that his all-aluminium cylinders would prove ideal for air-cooled motorcycle applications, as the heat conductivity of aluminium is about three times that of steel and with radiating fins his engines would run much cooler than those with cast iron or

machined steel cylinders. This would not only make for a more efficient engine, but also minimise cylinder wall cracking, as experienced with some cast iron cylinders at the sites of localised heat pockets. The plan was to install special valve seats and guides, possibly as a unit structure into either the cylinder for side-valve or cylinder head for ohv engines.

While many observers were concerned about cylinder wall wear due to the design, Mr Funck reckoned the aluminium pistons currently in use with steel or cast iron cylinders, especially in aviation applications, exhibited good wear qualities, so why shouldn't his aluminium cylinders? Further reports were expected from the Coventry inventor...

### 1941

It was brought to Press attention that while the motor bus service in many parts of the British Isles was suspended early in the New Year due to severe ice, a local district nurse burbled past a crowd of bus drivers refusing to set out on

their routes on her Excelsior autocycle. In fact, the Press correspondent was also out and about on his machine that morning and concluded that if bus schedules had been slowed by 25%, the service could have continued.

### 1966

With clear blue skies and sunshine, riders from the UK, France, Holland, Luxembourg, Italy, further afield and of course Germany enjoyed their trip to the annual (13th) Elephant Rally at the Nurburgring.

It was more like a camping weekend in summer than mid-winter. Over 7000 enthusiasts gathered by mid Saturday afternoon and the grid stretched literally out of sight. Next stop, the Dragon Rally.

### 1991

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) inspectors asked the Norton factory for all records covering its last three years trading after Norton shares plummeted from 15p to 6p in early January. A company

spokesman stated the DTI didn't indicate the reason. It was common knowledge Norton was involved in a contentious £8.2million takeover of the German fastener business FUS.

**Richard Rosenthal.**



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# Offham Steam Rally success

While few of the traction engines that originated at the Offham Steam Rally now attend, it remains an annual get-together (on October 18, 2015) of all sorts of older transport that totally dominates the Kent village.

The vehicles form a loose guard of honour for the usual late morning arrival of the steam engines that have a difficult time threading their way through the classic-clogged roads.

By this time, the generous village green all but disappears beneath

a covering of venerable metal. The convenient pub expands its facilities to keep up with the demand for refreshment.

With no formal organisation, it is up to everyone to remember that the event takes place on the Sunday preceding the end of British Summer Time. With the considerable numbers of those making the most of the opportunity to wander, admire and share the common bond of old machinery, it's a definite date for the diary.

**Alan Turner**



Few bikes at Offham had as much patina as this well-travelled Excelsior!

## Tangerine Dream prize draw

Following on from the summer raffle, details for the National Motorcycle Museum's winter 2015 raffle have been announced.

Museum director James Hewing stated: "We have another exceptional first prize for our winter 2015 raffle with an original, matching numbers 1959 Triumph T120 'Tangerine Dream' Bonneville, which has been restored in the museum's workshops."

A 1966 Triumph Tiger Cub 200cc is on offer for second, while a weekend break for two people at the Windmill Village Hotel ([www.windmillvillagehotel.co.uk](http://www.windmillvillagehotel.co.uk))



Little and large Triumphs are offered in the NMM's next raffle.

co.uk) is the third prize. The draw is on Sunday, April 24, 2016, at the Stafford show.

Tickets cost £2 each and will be distributed during Nov/Dec 2015 via

subscription copies of the specialist press. They are also available from the museum on 01675 444123 and also online at [www.thenmm.co.uk](http://www.thenmm.co.uk)



## Edward Lewis

Edward Lewis passed away peacefully on September 23, 2015, aged 92. A lifelong motorcyclist from age 11, Nortons remained his passion after he rode an ES2 to school. A lengthy racing career on two wheels was punctuated by semi-professional driving and the creation of an Edward Lewis Special that inspired the iconic Lotus Seven. Retiring with wife Marjorie and his collection of Nortons to the Spanish island of Menorca in 1985, he competed in local trials on a 500T and in 1989, aged 66, he rode from Barcelona to London on a 1927 Model 18, raising £250 for cancer research.

**Mike Lewis**

## Virtually go round Donington Park

Fans of Donington Park can now get on track at the legendary East Midlands circuit from the comfort of their own homes, as Donington can now be viewed on Google Street View.

For more information on events at Donington Park visit [donington-park.co.uk](http://donington-park.co.uk)



It's now possible to go round Donington Park with Google Street View.

## Springfield show

The 30th running of this event takes place on January 23/24 at Springfield Events Centre, Spalding, with John McGuinness as the guest of honour. More details are available at [www.springfieldsbikeshow.co.uk](http://www.springfieldsbikeshow.co.uk)





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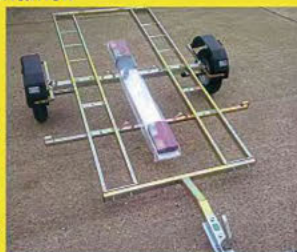
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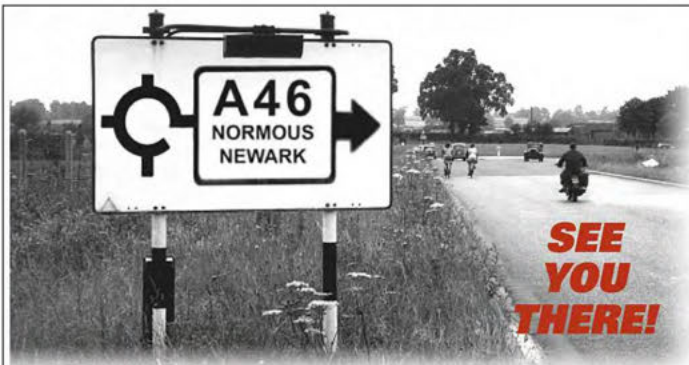
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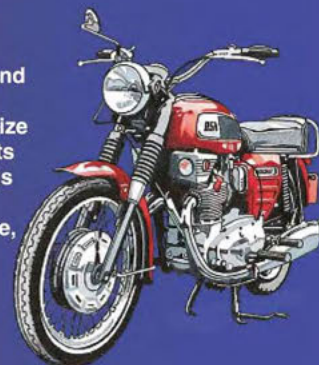
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# Diary

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### DECEMBER 2015

#### DECEMBER 5

**Southern Off Road & Racing Show & Jumble**, Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury-on-Thames.  
[www.egp-enterprises.co.uk](http://www.egp-enterprises.co.uk)  
**Rufforth Autojumble**, Rufforth Park, York YO23 3QH.  
[www.rufforthautojumble.com](http://www.rufforthautojumble.com)

#### DECEMBER 6

**VMCC (Northampton) Winter Woolies Run**, The Bull, Harpole, 11am. Martin Laundon 01604 586144.  
**Club Day**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)

#### DECEMBER 10

**LE Velo (Lancs & S Lakes)**, Glasson Dock, near Lancaster, 11am for 12.  
Tel 01772 782516.

#### DECEMBER 11

**Classic Bike & Car Meet**, The Victoria, Coalville, Leics LE67 3FA.  
Tel 01530 814718.  
[www.vicbikerspub.co.uk](http://www.vicbikerspub.co.uk)

#### DECEMBER 12-13

**Kickback Chelsea**, Stamford Bridge, Chelsea, London.  
Free tickets at  
[www.TheCustomShow.com](http://www.TheCustomShow.com)

#### DECEMBER 13

**'Normous Newark, Newark Showground**, Notts NG24 2NY.  
[www.newarkautojumble.co.uk](http://www.newarkautojumble.co.uk)  
**Xmas Toy Run**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)  
**Autojumble**, Manchester Road, Rixton, near Warrington WA3 6EA.  
T Taylor 07860 648103.

#### DECEMBER 18

**Classic Bike & Car Meet**, The Victoria, Coalville, Leics LE67 3FA.  
Tel 01530 814718.  
[www.vicbikerspub.co.uk](http://www.vicbikerspub.co.uk)

#### DECEMBER 19

**Scorton Giant Auto/Bike Jumble**, North Yorkshire Events Centre DL10 6EH.  
Bert 07909 904705.

#### DECEMBER 20

**Paws n' Claws Pet Food Run to Mayhew Animal House**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)  
**Xmas Carol Service**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)

#### DECEMBER 26

**Cold Turkey Meet**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)

#### DECEMBER 27

**'Cold Turkey' Bike Day**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)  
**Huddersfield Autojumble Party**.  
Jeff 07795 505388.  
[phoenixfairs.jimdo.com](http://phoenixfairs.jimdo.com)  
**Wells Classic MCC. John's Day after Boxing Day Run**.  
John 01761 432856.  
[www.wellsclassicmotorcycleclub.co.uk](http://www.wellsclassicmotorcycleclub.co.uk)  
**VMCC (Northampton) Christmas Cracker Run**, Hunsbury Country Park, 11am.  
Dave Mead 01327 342570.  
**Autojumble**, Manchester Road, Rixton, near Warrington WA3 6EA.  
T Taylor 07860 648103.

#### DECEMBER 31

**New Year's Eve Party**, Ace Cafe London NW10 7UD.  
[www.ace-cafe-london.com](http://www.ace-cafe-london.com)

### JANUARY 2016

#### JANUARY 1

**VMCC (Essex) New Year's Day Run**, Writtle Green, near Chelmsford.  
Tel Roger Gulliver 01621 892606.  
**VMCC (Dorset) New Year's Day Run**, Sturminster Newton.  
Tel Gabby Hunt 01963 250184.

#### JANUARY 2

**Rufforth Autojumble**.  
[www.rufforthautojumble.com](http://www.rufforthautojumble.com)

#### JANUARY 9-10

**The Carole Nash Classic Bike Guide Winter Classic**, Newark Showground NG24 2NY  
[www.classicbikeshows.com](http://www.classicbikeshows.com)

#### JANUARY 10

**VMCC (Dorset) Winter Run**, Stalbridge.  
Tel. Bob Hoare 01963 364618.

#### JANUARY 16

**Scorton Giant Auto/Bike Jumble**, North Yorkshire Events Centre DL10 6EH.  
Tel. Bert 07909 904705.

#### JANUARY 17

**20th Malvern Drive-In Classic Car & Motorcycle Autojumble**, Wye Halls & Outside, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcs WR13 6NW.  
Tel 01484 667776.  
Email [info@classicshows.org](mailto:info@classicshows.org)  
[www.classicshows.org](http://www.classicshows.org)  
**Kidlington Auto Jumble**, Exeter Halls, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1AB.  
Tel 0208 252 6831 or 07968 080990.  
**Huddersfield Autojumble**, Old Market Building, Huddersfield.  
Tel Jeff 07795 505388; 01773 819154.  
Email [jeffpff@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jeffpff@hotmail.co.uk)

#### JANUARY 23

**Kempton Bike Jumble**, Kempton Park, Racecourse, Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 5AQ.  
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[www.egp-enterprises.co.uk](http://www.egp-enterprises.co.uk)



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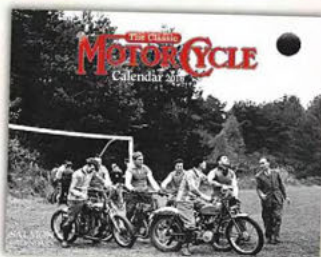
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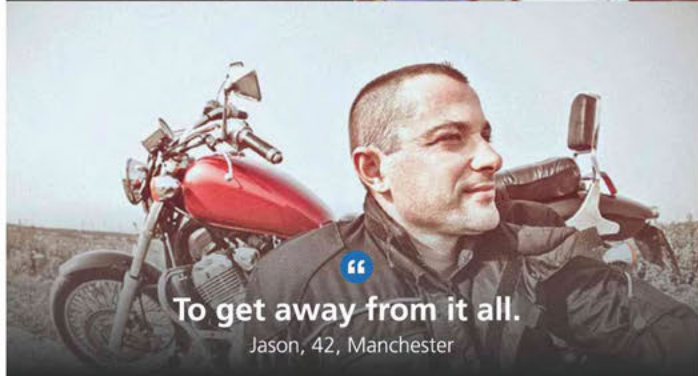
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# Bonhams



# Readers' Letters

YOUR VOICE & YOUR OPINIONS

## Big praise for Nigel's 'beautiful' Commando

Your front cover picture (December 2015 issue) stopped me in my tracks and reading the corresponding article left me speechless.

I have owned two Commandos; a 750cc Interstate with the Combat motor and an 850cc Roadster. They were both owned from new and, as the feature says, they were impressive enough in period.

The last Commando I rode was a Fastback LR that I borrowed from a mate. This must have been around 1990, so

the Norton was getting on for 20 years old then. Even accepting that my mate's mechanical skills weren't the best in the world, to ride a Commando again after 20 years was a horrible experience. I was left wondering why I ever bothered to own one, let alone two.

Nigel Waring has transformed his Commando into a bike that is fast, functional and gobsmackingly beautiful. I shudder to think what the total spend was. I have no doubt that it stops as

well as it goes and probably goes better than any 850cc Commando has ever done. Back in the 1970s the 'superbike road tests' – which I think were published by Bruce Main-Smith – declared a 750cc Commando 'S' type capable of 12 second quarters. Not bad at all for a little over 50bhp. A standard 850 wouldn't match that, the 850 was a noticeably softer deal, as I remember.

Of course there is always a 'but' with me, and it is this. To my eye



**Nigel Waring's lean and racy Norton Commando. This bike is certainly no trailer queen.**

the rear hub would look much better with the cover in place, and it is a mystery how the speedo works with nothing driving the inner cable. Perhaps it, like most

restoration projects, is a continuing work in progress?

An awesome build by Nigel and thanks for another terrific issue.

**Victor Garmin, via email.**

## Triumph tales

In the November 2015 edition of *The Classic MotorCycle*, Roy Hayter of South Africa enquired about the Triumph T100SC supplied to the South African military.

A batch of these bikes – some say 200, some say 500 – was supplied to the South African army in around 1965. I have been trying to get a photograph of one in its original paint scheme, so far without success.

When I was living in Johannesburg, I acquired one which had been converted to what we in the UK would call 'Green Lane' trim. I then set out to convert it to be a replica of Roy Peplow's trials Triumph, and I succeeded... as can be seen from the photo (below).

But I farmed out the rebuild of the bottom end of the engine as I was pretty busy at work at that time, and I think the guy who did the job left out the timed breather on the end of the inlet cam. The result was that when I started the motor the oil didn't just leak, it pumped out.

In disgust I parked the bike in a corner and eventually sold it on. A pity I couldn't realise its potential.

**Lindsay Jamieson, Dorset.**



**Lindsay Jamieson's converted T100SC, which was eventually sold, its potential unrealised.**

## Speaking up in defence of the Capac carburettor

I can't let the comment that the Capac carburettor was useless (Technical feature, November 2015 issue) go unchallenged, as I've found otherwise.

The Capac wasn't sold, as far as I can see, for motorcycles but for cyclecars. It was fitted as standard on GNs, ABCs, Enfield-Alldays etc. I have one on my GN and it is going fine after 95 years and 70,000 miles. It doesn't need a choke but it does need an adjustable throttle stop (done by a hand throttle on the GN).

When the throttle is completely closed a bypass jet pulls in neat petrol, as soon as the throttle is opened this ceases and it then uses the needle jet. As far as I can see it is a design highjacked from the carburettor on a Model T Ford, of which several million were made.

I think the death of the Capac was probably because the advent of the Austin Seven killed off all the early 1920s cyclecars (except the Morgan), so their market disappeared.

**Paul Hirons, Buckingham.**

## The wrong-coloured vintage Harley-Davidson

In your December 2015 issue I found an advert with a picture of a 1924 Harley-Davidson 1200cc Model JD priced at £18,000. I'll use this advert to tell you and your readers that nine out of 10 restored

Harleys are striped with the wrong decal (transfer). From 1916-1928 the colour should be maroon instead of the bright red, which came in 1929, and is mostly used on restored Harleys.

The main colour

on the bike is often a problem. The original colour has darkened – the correct colour should be what today's painters call the colour of a baby's fecal matter!

**Olle Ridehvs, Sweden.**





**WRITE TO:** The Classic MotorCycle, PO Box 99, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 6LZ  
**EMAIL:** jrobinson@mortons.co.uk **FAX:** 01507 529495

## Violet and Vera: could this be the same woman?

I saw the wonderful picture of Miss Violet Porter with her BSA in the November 2015 issue of *The Classic MotorCycle* and felt sure I'd seen this intrepid rider somewhere before.

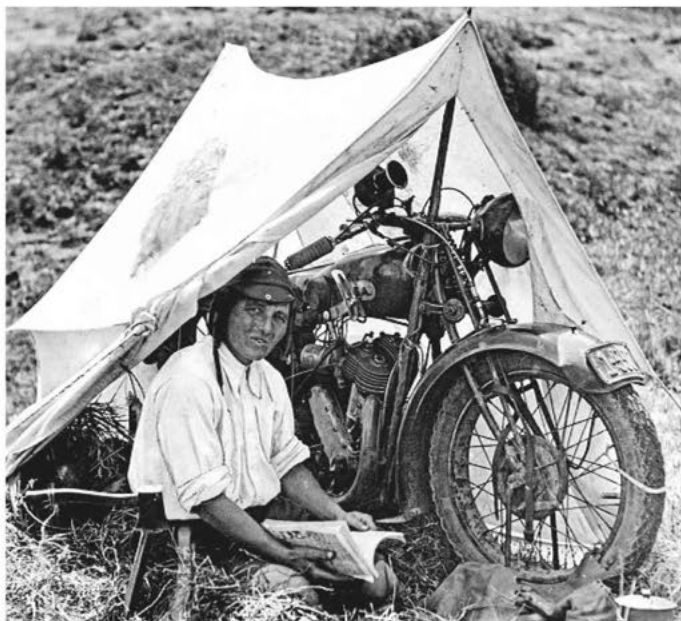
In the Mortons Archive there's a picture of the same lady (or a close relative), collecting a new BSA Sloper in 1934. The caption describes her as Mrs Vera Harding-Foster, but the photograph seems to depict the same lady. The new Sloper certainly seems to

have the same style of number plate as her earlier machine, so this second photograph was probably also taken in New Zealand.

These old photographs are fascinating. I hope she enjoyed her new BSA!

**Simon Hadden, Longframlington, Northumberland.**

*Ed note; What do you think? Are these two women one and the same?*



Left, the image from our November 2015 issue and right, the image from the Mortons Archive that Simon Hadden alluded to.

## Classic insurance qualms

For years I've had unnecessary complications with my classic insurance. I prefer to insure my bikes on agreed value because of the uncertainty of what the payout might be for a claim under 'market value'. This means that every other year I have to go to friends who are dealers, restorers or club officials, to get them to vet my bikes and to sign a condition and valuation form.

I'm sure this is a relatable situation for most of the historic bike community. I wonder if the insurance companies couldn't get together to provide this service themselves as they have databases of value and condition of bikes already insured and could also keep in touch with auction and advert prices. In fact this would be a nice little earner for them, since if they charged say £20 per bike valuation (i.e. £10 per annum) it would, I am sure, comfortably cover their costs. At present I have six bikes and, though I don't particularly want to, would prefer to pay £60 per year more rather than rely on the good will of my aforementioned chums, not to mention the vast quantities of beer, wine and curries that this involves!

An alternative would be for these companies, once the bikes have been valued for the first time, to apply an inflation factor. Insurance companies already do this with house and contents insurance where valuable items, such as jewellery and cameras, are named on those policies – without ever inspecting them, in my experience.

This may sound like quite a radical change, but I think these suggestions might be of interest to your readers.

I feel that the classic bike insurance industry is now too big to be relying on the goodwill of 'favours' for such an important function.

**Arnie Bennett, via email.**

## Spanish intrigue

I love classic bikes and the English models are, for me, on top of all others. I recently subscribed to your magazine and it's a pleasure to read about them every month. I don't know if you, from time to time, publish any articles about classic Spanish bikes? I would love to read something of that nature.

We have built great bikes such as Bultacos, Montesas, Ossas, Derbis and Ducati Mototrans – the Ducatis built in Barcelona under licence. In 1959 the first model, the Ducati 125 Sport, came out. Other models followed this one.

Attached is a photograph of my 1964 Ducati 125 TS, in all-original condition.

**Mario Gran, Barcelona, Spain.**



**Mario Gran's lovely little Ducati 125 Sport.**





# All about the timing

The Brighton Speed Trials, one of the oldest events in the calendar, returned on September 5, 2015, with a varied and competitive entry.

Words and photography: ALAN TURNER

**T**he motorcycle entry at the annual Speed Trials is always by invitation of the organising Brighton and Hove Motor Club. While the Vintage MCC Sprint Section could easily fill the allotted programme space with modern straight-line rockets, it tries to encourage as wide a variety of machinery as possible.

With a car entry lacking in depth this year, it was the two- (and three-) wheel show that ensured the huge crowd was pressed hard against the barriers, determined not to miss any of the action.

Unfortunately, the historic Terrace, offering the view down on to Madeira Drive, had been declared completely unsafe just weeks before the event, meaning a rearrangement of the spectator and paddock areas.

**1 Mark Illman enjoyed his runs on the Derek Leigh Rudge but 15- and 16-second times were just too far apart to be in contention.**

**2 Clifford Shorter has almost finished bringing his 500cc Manx Norton back to original specification.**

Practice had been hastily marshalled, with the bikes not even running in their usual number order. The nature of the sport means sprinting is always intense, but the severely limited track time at Brighton, offering just one practise run, adds considerably more to the pressure. Towards the end of the session, a slight drizzle made conditions even trickier.

As ever, the Vintage and Classic Class was determined by consistency, rather than outright speed, with the award going for the narrowest difference between the two timed runs during the afternoon. The first outing took place just after the lunch break, which had also provided a sprinkling of rain, although this soon dried in the sea breeze.

First bike out was Bob Anderson, on his replica of Alf Hagon's V-twin JAP. As the strident exhaust





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faded after a 14.87 second run, it was John Bottomley on a purposeful Velocette that, according to the owner-builder, approximately equated to a MAC, good enough for 16.09 seconds. British-domiciled Frenchman Charles Boulanger had brought a Royal Enfield Continental into which a Triumph engine had been neatly slotted, but this needed coaxing to start, then yet more persuasion to run.

Frank Clarke was next to hit trouble with his historic Brooklands Norton-JAP and he failed to make his first run. John Hobbs had made the long haul south for another outing on his recreation of Olympus, his supercharged 500cc Triumph. The red, white and blue blur off the line looked slick and the clocks confirmed at 11.74 seconds. He was second quickest in class, beaten only by the 1272cc of Roy Robertson's Egli-Vincent replica thundering to 11.38.

**3 John Bottomley gets his Velocette special off the line. Built from a mix of MOV and MAC parts, it was good enough to post a 15 second time.**

**4 Vincent Cheesman gets ready for another outing on his flat-track Triumph.**

**5 Mike Wade and his Ariel Red Hunter returned for another tilt at Brighton. Since last year, the bike has grown to a full half-litre and ran well.**

The always-immaculate appearance of Roy's bike belies its humble beginnings as a collection of (very) disparate parts.

Chris Illman was out for another outing on the Bayley-Cole Douglas with Dr Antony Bayley, the bike's owner, on hand to watch progress, with times in the 14 second zone. Some non-starters meant Mark Illman's Rudge entry turned out to be the only representative of the manufacturer at Brighton. Mark was pleased to exercise the throttle on the indecently quick Derek Leigh bike.

A mention also of Martin Murray's Vespa scooter that showed a remarkable turn of speed. Roger Pales had sold his Vincent Comet to Jeremy Pike, but was on hand to help the new owner get to grips with the bike. It ran with a beautiful polished aluminium 'dustbin' fairing, still legal in sprinting. ▶





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**6** Chris Illman winds up the Bayley-Cole Douglas, a bike with a long and successful association with Brighton.

**7** With just three-hundredths difference between his two timed runs Allan Randall (Ducati Mk. 3) collected the Consistency award.

**8** A huge crowd is looking on as Jeremy Pike's Vincent Comet is marshalled into position.

**9** Frenchman Charles Boulanger launches his Triumph-engined Royal Enfield Continental.

**10** Now semi-retired, John Hobbs' straight-line outings are few and far between. He made fastest run in his class at Brighton.



9



10

He was followed by Allan Randall on a 1965 Ducati Mk 3. Back for another go were two Ariel singles, the 'Badger Special' of Andrew Taylor and the less modified Red Hunter of Mike Wade. Last year, the latter was work in progress, it remains so, but has already grown from 350 to 500cc. Clifford Shorter and Barry Stickland were both mounted on suitably silenced Manx Nortons, although road-race gear ratios resulted in 17-second times. Last of the class and spectacular as always was John Young on his minimalist 1936 Triumph, with 500cc of Speedway JAP power posting a 13.10 time.

Elsewhere, others took their chances by entering the open classes with older bikes. A third Manx, a Petty version, was contesting the open 500 Class in the hands of Malcolm Herwin. A best run of 14.30 meant he was trounced by Andy Forward, on his lower-than-low Triumph Morado dedicated sprint bike that he wrung to 13.87 seconds. Not disturbing the big guns in the close-fought 1000cc class, Vincent Cheesman's flat-track style Triumph T140 attracted many admiring glances in the paddock.

Maybe out of *The Classic Motorcycle's* time frame, but still worth a mention, was Tony Haywood, who brought a Norton rotary to add a nostalgic touch to those who remember when the official JPS Norton team came to Brighton. Busy Alex Champion was helping as paddock marshal as well as riding a Moto Guzzi Le Mans, family property for years, he was adding to the odometer's 130,000-plus miles.

The weather looked a little more optimistic for the second timed runs. These defined the Consistency Class, while others strived to improve on their first times. A determined 11.29 saw previous winner John Hobbs establish quickest time in the class, but a 0.45 second difference put him way out of contention for the honours. Jeremy Pike achieved a seven-hundredths gap on the Vincent Comet, Chris Illman just five-hundredths, but the finest judge turned out to be Allan Randall, with a three-hundredths margin on his Ducati.

As the meeting drew to its finale, with the 'Fastest Six' competition, the quickest of the quick men, mostly Suzuki-powered, got a final chance, so Craig Mallabone's curtain-closing run of the day saw an amazing 9.06/172mph flash up on the displays.

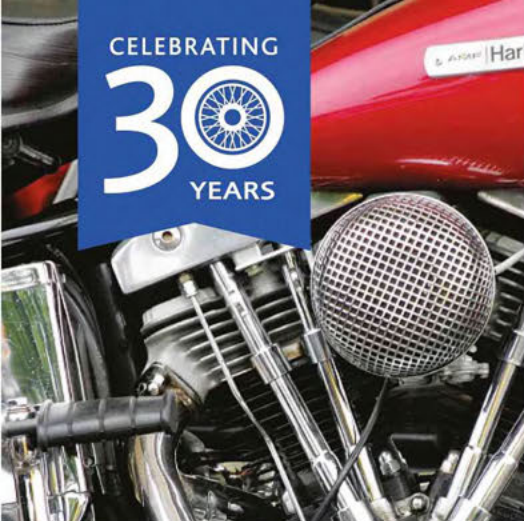
Commiserations to Alex Champion, as the Guzzi blew a head gasket on its first timed run and a rescue mission could not be completed in time for the second outing. Ironically, it's the essence of sprinting – it's all about timing.

End



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# Big day out

There was a stronger than anticipated attendance at this season's National Motorcycle Museum open day.

Words and photography: JAMES ROBINSON

**I**n 2014, the National Motorcycle Museum hosted an open day to celebrate its 30th anniversary, when the museum's doors were flung open and the public were invited in at no charge.

Such was the event's success that the decision was made to replicate the celebratory 'do' and once again it proved a resounding success, as visitors flocked from far and wide to the Birmingham museum site.

There were some star guests too, including ex-racers Carl Fogarty and James Whitham, while current TT campaigner Maria Costello came along as well. The talk show – with seating for 700 – was packed out, with many standing round the edges too. The whole site was abuzz with activity, many taking the opportunity of largely unexpected sunshine on this, the last day of October 2015, to ride in on two wheels.



Peter Greatolder tries the editor's Ducati Scrambler for size, while Peter's son James stands behind. The pair had come over from Stafford for their first visit to the museum, primarily on a search for parts and information on the 1938 125cc Excelsior with Villiers 8D engine Peter is restoring.

"It's so much harder trying to restore something like the Excelsior than the various other, more usual classics I've done," explained Peter. Anyone with any parts that they feel may help, especially gearbox items, please contact the editorial office!



From left, Miranda Hall, Rohan Cates and Simon Jones had come over from Nottingham for what was their second visit to the museum. Said Simon: "I have quite a few bikes, but only one that could be considered a classic, an ex-Second World War BSA M20. I'm really just getting into it at the moment."





The Williams family – Berwyn, Alun, Elen and Nia – had travelled from Bethesda, North Wales, for their first time at the museum. Currently, Berwyn's main interest is in Japanese machines. "The oldest thing I have at the moment is a C90 Honda," he said, "but I'm loving seeing all this old machinery being kept and cared for."



Museum director James Hewing was looking pleased with how things were going. "After the 30th anniversary success last year, we're really delighted to see such a big crowd here today. We hope and intend to build on it for next year, and every year thereafter," he explained.



The Lansdowne Classic series boasts the National Motorcycle Museum among its supporters (alongside *The Classic MotorCycle*). This year, the Lansdowne 'crew' had a weekend off from the hurly burly of the race paddock and had their marquee at the show. Fred Walmsley, Stuart Tongue, Richard Adams and Mike Farrell were on duty, joined by – on the right – Zach Burns, who is the boyfriend of Mike's daughter. Zach bought a 1929 Rudge Ulster at Stafford in April this year, which Mike (well known in Rudge circles, of course) is helping him prepare to get back on the road.



"I've not been here before and have really enjoyed a good look round," said Peter Watson, as he had a snack and readied himself for the ride home on his Triumph Tiger Trail. "There are just so many bikes here, it's amazing," he enthused. "There's lots of things I'd never heard of and I'm fascinated by the early bikes. It's also great to come away having learned something. For example, I didn't realise that Royal Enfield had made V-twins."



Another first-time museum visitor was Dave Cresswell, who'd ridden from Mansfield, Notts, on his FJR1300 Yamaha. "Anything bikes is my thing. I'm fascinated by all the really old stuff," he commented, before going on to explain that apart from brief ownership of a BSA Bantam, he's never really been involved in the 'old bike scene'. He added: "It's great that there's still so much old stuff out there though. I do a lot of charity rideouts and see more old bikes than ever." Looking around the museum, Dave said: "As I'm originally from Nottingham, I've really enjoyed looking at the Brough Superiors." One of the charity events Dave had recently attended was the Ride to the Wall Memorial (<http://www.ridetothewall.org.uk>), which attracted 20,000 participants.



Rob Theaker, Lynne Yeubrey and Paul Bateman have all been to the museum several times before, but had enjoyed the early morning ride over from Wolverhampton, on their Kawasaki VX1600, Hinckley Bonneville and Yamaha FJR1300. Lynne, in particular, would love to have an old bike but reckons she doesn't possess the necessary skills to keep one in fine fettle, while Rob added: "I used to have old bikes, but not now." Still, they all love coming to the museum and having a look round. There was a particular cherry on the top for Lynne, who managed to speak to guest Carl Fogarty. She reckoned: "I'm really happy to have spoken to Foggy. I asked him about the jungle." (ITV's *I'm a Celebrity* TV show, which he won last season. Apparently, so Lynne told me, he's going back to present some prizes...)





# Season's round up

The second half of the Lansdowne campaign brought more close racing, with four champions duly crowned.

**Words:** RICHARD ADAMS **Photography:** SPORTS-PICS AND RICHARD ADAMS

**A**t the end of May, the Lansdowne Series was invited by Bemsee to Oulton Park, which is a great circuit for classic motorcycles and a firm favourite with most riders.

Mike Edwards on the Ripley Land G50 won both races, which increased his lead in the Bonhams British Championship Class. He was chased home in both races by Alex Sinclair and Glen English.

In the National Motorcycle Museum sponsored WRR class, Peter Crew managed two class wins and each time was followed home by TT star Charlie Williams, both on Manx Nortons. In the Avon Tyres sponsored 350cc class Andy Molnar on his Manx got maximum points, as did Tony Perkin (Rudge) in *The Classic MotorCycle*-sponsored TCM class.

The next meeting was with the North Gloucester Club for two days at Castle Combe, for the only motorcycle race at the circuit in 2015. There is always an enormous crowd at this meeting.

We had a guest rider among us at this one by the name of James Haydon riding a G50 which he was to ride at the Goodwood Revival meeting in September. Former British Superbike and 500cc GP rider James only did the Saturday race and managed to get fourth place, mixing it with the front runners. Mike Edwards

**1** The start of one of the races at Donington. Among the leader are Mike Edwards (G50, 121), Duncan Fitchett (Manx, 7) and Glen English (Manx, 25).

**2** Mike Edwards, head down and charging hard on the Matchless G50 at Snetterton.

took all three wins in the Bonhams class, Peter Crew (Manx) all three in the WRR class and Richard Molnar (Manx) all the Avon 350cc wins, leaving Tony Perkin to sweep up the TCM class wins.

Next it was off to Cadwell for the MSV-organised International Classic meeting with three races over two days. Saturday was fine but Sunday was very wet. Mike Edwards dominated the Bonhams class, as did Peter Crew in the WRR class, Ian Lucas (Manx) in the Avon 350cc class took the wins there and Tony Perkin again in the TCM class.







In August, everyone was invited by the CRMC to the excellent Donington Classic Festival for three days. This is a meeting where everyone can take off their silencers and make as much noise as possible! A whole grid of more than 30 noisy, mostly 500cc singles. It makes you realise how noisy racing in the 1960s was – wonderful!

Here there were four races and in the third one, Mike Edwards was beaten to the line by an ecstatic Alex Sinclair by 0.073sec. Edwards won the others. Ian Bain (Manx) managed to spoil Peter Crew's clean sweep as well in the WRR class and Jeff Bing (Manx) dominated the Avon 350cc class and Tony Perkin's old Rudge kept on clocking up the TCM points.

At the end of August, the series was invited to put on a support race at the Silverstone MotoGP meeting. This was to be a non championship round as it clashed with the Classic TT where several Lansdowne regulars always ride. We were given the new F1 Wing as our home for the weekend, which was fantastic, as we had garages so big that you could park your vans inside!

**3** Tony Perkin on his extremely rapid, methanol-burning Rudge. Here at Snetterton.

**4** Winner of the WRR class, Peter Crew on the 500cc Manx. Richard Hann (Manx) fl

**5** Cadwell action. Alex Sinclair leads the way, from Keith Clark and Chris Firmin, all Manx.

**6** The champion of the Avon 350cc class, Ian Lucas, Manx.

**7** Cadwell Park podium. From left, Alex Sinclair, Mike Edwards and Mike Russell.

For this event all bikes had to have an oil containment tray under the engine/gearbox so as not to drop even the slightest drip on the hallowed Tarmac.

The race was on Saturday evening and was a close thing between the first three, all on Manx Nortons, Duncan Fitchett, Mike Russell and Chris Firmin. They all took a turn in leading the race, and it ended up being the closest race finish of the weekend with Fitchett taking it from Russell by 0.061sec at the flag. The next day Sunday was wet and everyone could watch Mr Rossi give a lesson in wet weather riding, and a British win in the Moto3 by Danny Kent.

## FINAL 2015 CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

### BONHAMS LANSDOWNE BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP

**1st**, Mike Edwards, 330. **2nd**, Chris Firmin, 212. **3rd**, Mike Russell, 210.

### MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM WRR CHAMPIONSHIP

**1st**, Peter Crew, 351. **2nd**, Seb Perez, 211. **3rd** =, Gordon Russell, 113. **3rd** =, Mike Farrall, 113.

### AVON LANSDOWNE 350CC CHAMPIONSHIP

**1st**, Ian Lucas, 201. **2nd**, Jeff Bing, 121. **3rd**, Mick Baldwin, 59

### THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE CHAMPIONSHIP

**1st**, Tony Perkin, 248. **2nd**, Mike Farrall, 105

### WINNER OF THE KARL HEINZ LANSDOWNE CUP WAS PETER CREW





8

There was no meeting in September, so it was on to October and an invitation to join the CRMC for their Race of the Year meeting on the Snetterton 300 circuit for three days of glorious sunshine and close racing. No better way to end the season.

There were two races on Saturday and one extra long race on Sunday, with double championship points for the last race. At the front in the Bonhams class there several riders looking to go out in glory so it was close, as the wily old Mike Edwards took two wins but Mike Russell got the better of him in race three by 0.275sec, with Chris Firmin (Manx) not far behind. In the WRR class Peter Crew won all three but Seb Perez on his G50 has been getting ever closer to him during the season. In the Avon 350cc class Jeff

**8 In the holding area at Cadwell Park.**

Bing managed a clean sweep as did Tony Perkin and the Rudge in the TCM class.

At the end of all that, Mike Edwards retained his British Championship in the Bonhams class, as has Peter Crew in the National Motorcycle Museum WRR class, Ian Lucas came out top of the Avon 350s and the ever reliable Rudge took Tony Perkin to *The Classic MotorCycle* class win.

So another great season has ended and all riders would like to thank the clubs and organisers who invited us to their meetings and our four generous sponsors all of whom have helped make 2015 a successful and enjoyable year. Let us hope we can all do it together again in 2016 – dates will be forthcoming shortly.

End

## THE CLASSES AND AWARDS...

### KARL-HEINZ LANSDOWNE CUP

In memory of former competitor Karl-Heinz Kalbfell, who lost his life in an accident at Brands Hatch in 2013. This trophy is awarded to the highest point scorer of the four main Bonhams, WRR, Avon and TCM championships.

### BONHAMS LANSDOWNE BRITISH HISTORIC CHAMPIONSHIP

For pre 1963 500cc Grand Prix racing motorcycles, either original or replica, but in a very period original specification. Thus original sized wheels, exhaust systems, carburettors and so on

are required plus the appearance of the bike must be very much in keeping with bikes the period. Riders use 'control' Avon tyres.

The winner of this championship will be a British Champion.

This championship is sponsored by Bonhams auctioneers

### WRR LANSDOWNE 500CC CHAMPIONSHIP

For pre 1963 351cc to 500cc racing motorcycles either original or replica in original condition but with allowed period type modifications. So for example such bikes with different sized

wheels, exhausts, carburettors and so on as long as such modifications were used in period.

Tyre choice is free. Such modifications will be subject to a handicap system similar to that used in the number of years. This is essentially how Lansdowne has always run

This championship is supported by The National Motorcycle Museum  
**2015 AVON TYRES 350CC CHAMPIONSHIP**

As for the Lansdowne 500cc Championship but for up to 350cc this is essentially how Lansdowne has always run. This

championship is supported by Avon Tyres.

### TCM LANSDOWNE CLUB CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP

This is a fairly new class for the Lansdowne Series and shares regulations with the very successful 1950s specification races at the Goodwood Revival.

This class is for very original pre 1954 Group 1 type bikes and pre 55 Group 2 bikes.

The Lansdowne Series was inspired by the Revival from the start so this is continuing a tradition. This championship is supported by *The Classic MotorCycle*.



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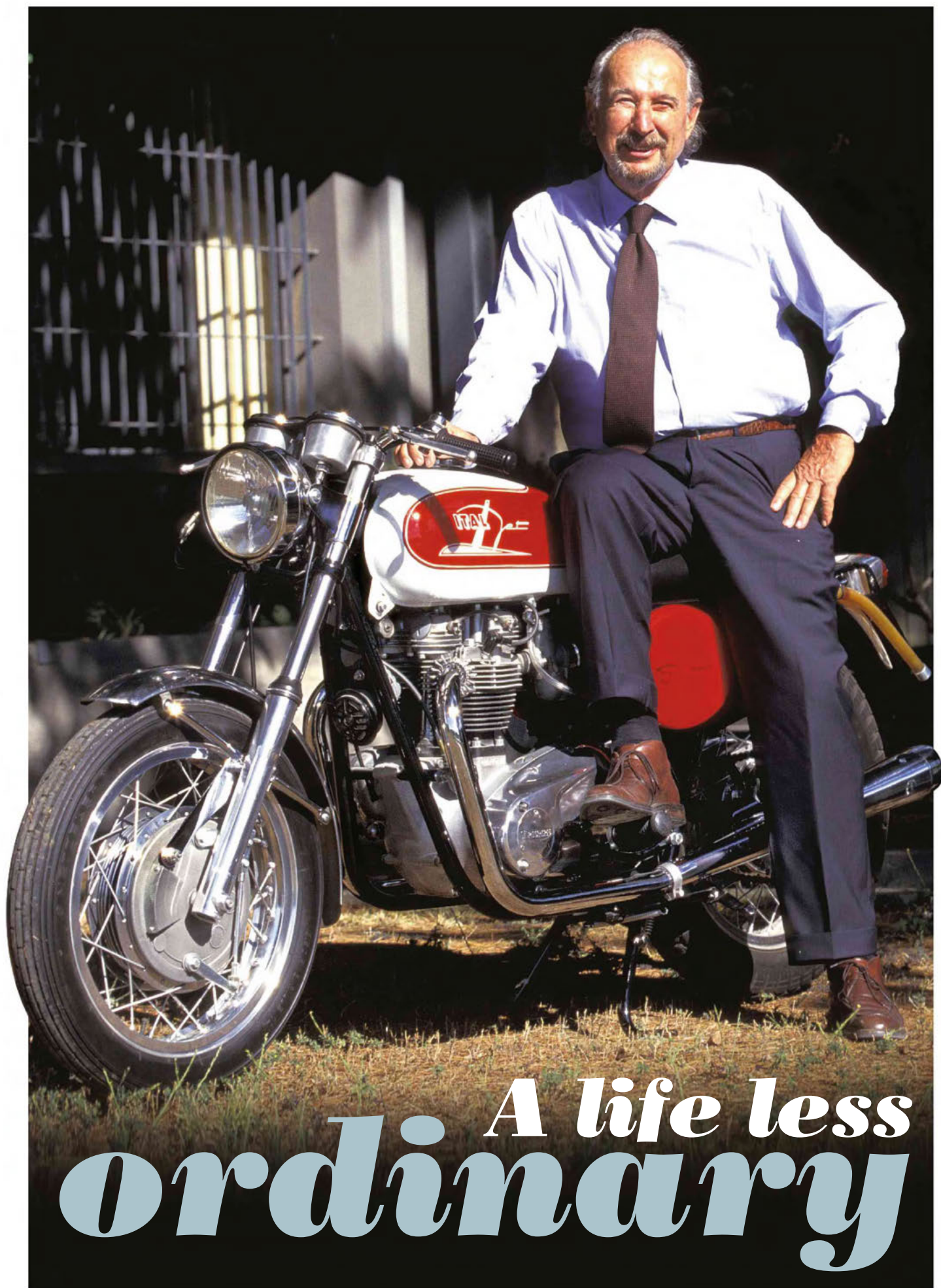
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*A life less  
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Few men in motorcycling led as full a life as the genial, pipe-smoking Italian designer Leopoldo Tartarini, who passed away on September 11 at his home in the hills outside Bologna, at the age of 83.

**Words:** ALAN CATHCART **Photography:** ALAN CATHCART ARCHIVE

**L**eopoldo Tartarini was the founder of Italjet, the small but highly innovative Italian manufacturer he established in 1960. During its 44 years of existence, Italjet developed more than 150 different imaginatively designed motorcycle and scooter models, most of them personally created by Tartarini, in between running the company.

In addition he undertook consultancy work for more than a decade with Ducati, for whom in addition to the Mk. 3 singles, 750cc Sport and 900cc Darmah V-twins, and the 350/500cc parallel-twin range, Tartarini produced the most iconic desmo V-twin motorcycle to emerge from the factory located the other side of Bologna from the Italjet plant in the suburb of San Lazzaro di Savena. Namely the green-frame 750SS race replica street version of Paul Smart's 1972 Imola 200-winning factory racer. This became the most notable of many desmo V-twin models whose attention-grabbing looks he was entirely responsible for creating.

However, when Tartarini's motorcycle career began at the age of 20 in 1952, it was on three wheels, not two. For that year he won the sidecar class in the gruelling 18-hour single-stage Milano-Taranto open-roads marathon, beating the favoured Moto Guzzi and Gilera-powered competition with a twin-cylinder BSA 650cc Golden Flash-engined outfit that he'd designed and built himself. He went on to enjoy



**Above:** Winning the Milano-Taranto sidecar class 1951 on his BSA Golden Flash outfit.

**Opposite:** Tartarini with one of his original Triumph-powered Grifons.

**Below:** Leopoldo Tartarini and Giorgio Monetti at start of the round-the-world trip.

further racing success on two wheels, winning the 1953 Milano-Taranto and the 1000km Motogiro, as well as many victories in local hillclimbs and circuit races. After a test at Monza, Count Domenico Agusta offered him a place in his MV Agusta factory race team for the 1954 GP season – an honour Tartarini was obliged to refuse, after his mother asked him to stay home and manage the family motorcycle dealership – in between winning the Milano-Taranto and the Motogiro, each for a second time.

Instead, Tartarini signed to race for the Ducati factory located in his home town of Bologna as a works rider and development engineer, working alongside another new arrival, the legendary chief ▶





designer, Fabio Taglioni. But a severe injury, which at one time had threatened to leave him paralysed, brought Tartarini's racing career to a premature halt – but he then embarked upon a year-long adventure as a publicity stunt for the Italian firm, in the company of Ducati's export sales manager, Giorgio Monetti. Together, the pair completed a 13-month long 60,000km round-the-world trip aboard two 175cc Ducati singles, visiting 42 countries in five continents after leaving Bologna in September 1957 to ride to India, then Australia, New Zealand, South America, North Africa, and through Europe back to Italy again.

Back home in Bologna the exuberant Tartarini was ready for a new challenge, which entailed more than merely selling motorcycles others had built, but also constructing his own. So, in February 1960 he founded a company eventually renamed Italjet, initially building MZ and Minarelli-powered cafe racers. Tartarini was then commissioned by BSA-Triumph management to develop a prototype lightweight model carrying the Ariel badge and powered by a 160cc two-stroke Minarelli engine, which was intended to replace the elderly BSA Bantam best-seller. The project never reached production, but it did introduce Tartarini to the British firm, leading to the creation of the 650cc Bonneville-powered Italjet Grifon, an Italian-built production version of the Triton cafe racer then already popular as a home-made special in Britain. Around 300 such bikes were sold in Italy, with a similar number shipped to the USA and Australasia, where although more expensive than the stock 650cc Bonneville, they found a ready market as high-performance British bikes with Latin looks – a winning combination.

Italjet's successful early 1960s range of innovative minibikes included more humble models with swinging sixties names such as the Franco Morini-engined 48cc Kit Kat and its small-wheeled counterpart, the Go-Go. Together with the Grifon's combination of crisp Italian styling, chassis design flair and British engine performance, these brought Italjet to the attention of American entrepreneur Floyd Clymer, who initially commissioned Tartarini to manufacture 100 Minarelli-engined 50cc minibikes for him to give as gifts to the US dealers he'd signed up to distribute the Indian range of bikes he was developing in conjunction with Friedl Münch in Germany, for which Clymer owned the trademark. In keeping with the



**Above: Italjet factory 1962. Note the MZ logos on the uniforms.**

**Below: Tartarini with Grifon 650 and minibike, 1967.**

Indian theme, these were named the Papoose. By inventing a new breed of baby Euro-bike, they were so successful that Italjet ended up building more than 15,000 for the US market, as a result of which Clymer also commissioned Tartarini to build full-size Indian motorcycles. These were based on the Italjet Grifon design, but fitted firstly with Royal Enfield Interceptor 750cc parallel-twin engines (of which just 50 were made), then with the Velocette Venom and Thruxton 500cc ohv single motors, of which 150 were built and sold mainly to the USA, before Clymer's death in 1970 brought an end to the Indian Velo project.

Leopoldo Tartarini's talents for building good-looking, fine-handling motorcycles of all capacities were by now well established, with his restless imagination and capacity for innovation extended to other fields. The Pack-A-Way was a 50cc moped that could be folded up into a package complete with carrying handle, the prototype of which found its way to New York's Museum of Modern Art. It became a must-have accessory for sailors, campers and owners of large cars with big boots (trunks...). In 1980, Italjet moved into the trials world, with purposeful 250/350cc models powered for the first time by the firm's own engines, specially developed for their light weight and compact build, with which American former world champion, Bernie Schreiber duly finished runner-up in the 1981 World Trials Championship.

The coming of the late 20th century scooter boom was foreseen by Tartarini, and from 1980 onwards Italjet successfully rode the wave of demand for personal transportation by carving out a unique reputation for innovative and quirky models, such as the retro-look Torpedo and Velocifero, or the avant garde hub-centre Dragster, which debuted in 1995, and the 125cc Formula introduced in 1994, which for many years was the only twin-cylinder small-capacity scooter in the marketplace. With its 180 workers producing up to 90,000 powered two-wheelers annually in the firm's modern 10,000m<sup>2</sup> factory on the Adriatic coast near Pescara, Italjet successfully surfed the success of the European scooter boom through the 1990s – a position that fuelled a revival of its sporting







traditions with the debut of its own 125GP racer in 2000 ridden by current World Superbike star, Leon Haslam, making his Grand Prix debut at the age of 16, and Czech rider Jaroslav Hules. But the company's sudden financial troubles forced Italjet to pull out of racing in 2003.

Those same money troubles forced Italjet to cancel its acclaimed Triumph-engined three-cylinder Grifon motorcycle project, which had been launched at the 1999 Milan Show. This would have been Italjet's first large-capacity motorcycle in 35 years, as a modern revival of the 650 Grifon, but powered by the Bloor-era 900cc Triumph three-cylinder engine. The Grifon 900 would have been the first-ever motorcycle to be built outside Hinckley powered by Triumph engines supplied under an official agreement with John Bloor himself, but the collapse of the lira in the months before Italy joined the Euro meant the project was cancelled. The unfavourable exchange rates meant the engines simply cost too much to buy for the bike to be sold at a competitive price.



## *“Tartarini had a talent for building fine-looking motorcycles.”*

**Above:** Tartarini, on right, supervising production of a Mini Bambino 50 in 1970.

**Below left:** In the Motogiro, of 1956, aboard a Ducati.

Tartarini's final Italjet brainwaves debuted at the 2001 Milan Show, including the three-wheeler Scoop (yes, with three Os), which delivered stability in turns thanks to the twin front wheels steered by a handlebar, yet allowed the rider to lean into curves on the pivoting vehicle. After Italjet's demise, the Scoop project was acquired by Piaggio, and duly became the acclaimed MP3 on sale today.

The sudden collapse of the European 50cc scooter market had led to Italjet entering administration in 2003, with its Pescara factory and the firm's Bologna HQ both closed, and the majority of its product line sold by the receiver to Kinetic in India, where various Italjet models continue to resurface. It was a sad end to the history of one of Italy's most innovative and individual marques.

But, unable to stem the flow of innovative new designs flowing from his creative mind, Leopoldo Tartarini founded the Tartajet design consultancy focusing on the development of advanced concepts for his clients around the world, including major manufacturers in Europe and Asia. These and Italjet's range of quirky, innovative models produced over its 44 years of existence stamped this passionate enthusiast for all forms of motorcycling as a top designer and a creative free spirit, able to think outside the two-wheeled envelope with consistent success. Leopoldo Tartarini was a true gentleman – in the English style, and not only for his love of Jaguars and Triumphs! With a modest and convivial personality, yet he possessed a depth of vision and a thirst for innovation resulting in a succession of products unlike anything else in the marketplace. The inventor of serial new concepts in the transportation sector, Leopoldo Tartarini succeeded in making scooters fun, as well as technically enticing, and stylistically chic. He will be very much missed, and our sympathies go to his wife Giorgia and sons Massimo and Riccardo. ▶







# Cosmopolitan creation

Italian design, British engine, American name and marketing come together in a marvellous motorcycle.

**Words:** JAMES ROBINSON **Photography:** GARY CHAPMAN

**F**or such a rare machine (sources vary on the numbers, with only something like 100 built according to some, up to 150 say others) I'm in the rare position of having ridden two examples of the Tartarini-designed, Floyd Clymer-financed Indian Velocette. Both were low mileage too, and they – as one would expect – felt similar indeed.

And what does that feel like? Well, the simplest analogy I can think of (and the one that came to mind the first time I rode Neil Redley's Indian some years ago) was that it felt just like an XT500 Yamaha, though the Indian predated the famous Yamaha by a good few years. I wonder if the Japanese had a look at Tartarini's design before building its own 'big single.' I'm sure I've read somewhere in the past that Tartarini had a hand, somewhere, in the Yamaha, but I can't find where I'd come across that information, or whether I've simply dreamed it up. But the riding sensation is uncannily similar. On the Indian, the rider feels to be sitting high, with the wide bars further accentuating that sensation – one sits on, rather than in, the motorcycle. Seat height, at 32in, is a good inch and half higher than a standard Venom, while the other thing about the Indian, especially compared to a standard Velocette sporting the RS (Rear Springing) frame, is that it is longer – the Indian is 55in, compared to the standard 53½in. I was actually surprised by that statistic and I'd have wagered that a standard Venom was the longer, from optical and riding impressions.

To ride, the Indian feels a generation newer than a standard Venom, despite the fact that production overlaps. It is taut and precise, and hugely confidence inspiring. I've ridden this one for a couple of 60-odd mile journeys, and it's comfortable too; in short, it's an absolutely lovely machine to ride. If it was practical to close one's eyes when riding it, and guess what it is, then the reaction would be 'early 70s Japanese, maybe Italian, trail influenced' (i.e. XT500) whereas the same question posed aboard a Venom, particularly if it's a big tank Venom Clubman (or Thruxton) makes the answer 'Mk.VIII KTT.' And that was introduced in 1939.

The story of the Indian is one of recognition, opportunism and, ultimately, tragedy. In the first instance recognition – Floyd Clymer (best known as a publisher of motorcycle publications, but a former Indian and Harley racer in his own right) wanted something on which to paste the Indian name he'd acquired in 1967, and so he looked at the Tartarini-designed machine as a short cut way into production. Clymer recognised that the Italjet machine was a quality-made product and then displayed opportunism too; Velocette, of Hall Green, Birmingham, was in financial strife and so it was happy to supply engines to go into the Italian-made chassis. Add some quality components – Marzocchi forks, Grimeca hubs, Ceriani shock absorbers, alloy wheel rims from Borrani – paint 'Indian' on the petrol tank and hey presto, there's a ready-made production machine... ▶



**Far left:** The gorgeous front brake comes from Grimeca. It works as well as it looks.

**Left:** Don't forget to turn this to 'on' otherwise you'll be going nowhere...





► We say ready made, but an inspection of the Indian does reveal a few 'short cuts' along the way. For example, the standard Velocette oil tank was used, only hidden behind side covers. And to fit in the oil tank it has – quite literally – been given a few well-placed 'whacks' so that it'll go in... And it is situated so that the filler is directly under the top rail of the frame too. Handy.

Other compromises abound. Fixtures and fittings are a mixture of Whitworth and metric, though there isn't a toolbox to carry any spanners in anyway. The petrol tank has a capacity of less than two gallons too.

Apparently, the first batch of Indian Velos were supplied in 'dusky pink' and the engine number on this machine confirmed it was one of that batch. Mike, at Grove Classics, was able to check the factory records and discovered that this engine was one of 23 Venoms that were invoiced on December 30, 1968, with the numbers running consecutively through VM6578C (C for coil) to 6600. Whether this is the exact colour this particular example is finished in we're unable to ascertain – but apparently the 'dusky pink' wasn't popular in America and so it was replaced by the more familiar gold and cream scheme most Indian Velos seem to have. Machines in publicity material seem to have featured quite a lot of blue, too, though the fact this model was in the first batch does tend to suggest its colour is correct. I think the 'dusky pink' (if this is what this one is!) is a really attractive colour.

The short, stubby exhaust on the Indian Velo gives quite some bark. I remember this from the previous example I'd ridden too – that one was, if anything, even louder. Starting is the usual Velocette drill, but



**Above: Rob Drury and Bella the Lakeland Terrier.**

it actually starts very easily – one of the bonuses of having a coil ignition, which, of course, delivers a big, fat, healthy spark when it comes in most useful. When starting, and this Indian starts easily, so long as one remembers to turn on the ignition, the position is somewhat fiddly, down by the left side-panel.

The owner of this Indian is Velocette enthusiast Rob Drury – it shares garage space with a Mk II Venom Clubman, a KSS and a pair of KTTs. Rob bought the Indian 18 months ago, when its aesthetic condition was not dissimilar to how it appears now. He has made various modifications, including reversing the camplate so the Velocette has 'up for up' gearchange pattern, which pre-war Velos have (and postwar Triumphs too, of course) and which he has on all of his other Velocettes.

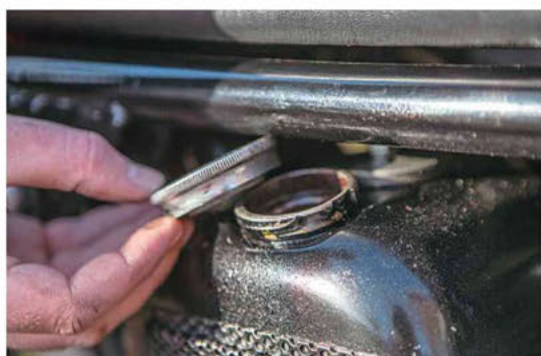
Rob also made new oil pipes as the old ones had gone hard and rigid – they appeared to be the original ones. He fitted a VOC paper oil filter, as well as adding a JG regulator, to go with a new dynamo. Then there were fresh tyres too – though the old ones, which were Avon Supremes, looked okay (and weren't actually too bad – the first time I rode the bike it was shod with them) – it was deemed prudent to have a new set, Steve Lomas at Five-One Wheels (01507 343313) sourced a set of 18in Pirelli City Demons, which have the right chunky look; the Supremes seem to be no longer available.

Another fiddly job that ended up taking far longer than anticipated was the fuel cap, which didn't shut properly and leaked. Rob took it apart – "I don't think it was designed to come apart..." he reckons in hindsight – while putting it back together was a two-day job too, with a Velocette kickstart spring eventually used in its (re)construction.

Rob also had the primary drive down too, just for strip and reassembly. As he said: "I just wasn't quite happy with it." Despite that, he found nothing wrong and careful reassembly has resulted in a really nice, light clutch and smooth-acting drive train. Next on the list will be a rewire by Ferret from Ferret's Electrickery (07765 832420) – again, it isn't desperately needed, but it will just improve and neaten up the Velo and take out another potential problem before it arises.

So what conclusions can we draw about the Velocette and its creator? Well, it is a rider's motorcycle and a true joy to pilot. In many ways, it could be called the ultimate road-going Velocette, a modern machine that gave the old engine yet another lease of life. And I think its influence is perhaps still to be seen; have a look at Suzuki's home market Tempter. The style of Tartarini surely?

**End**



**Left: The oil cap takes some dexterity to undo, while filling the tank is a fiddly job as well.**

**Right: The Velocette oil tank has been 'persuaded' to fit the Italian side panels.**





# A PENGUIN IN A SPARROW'S NEST

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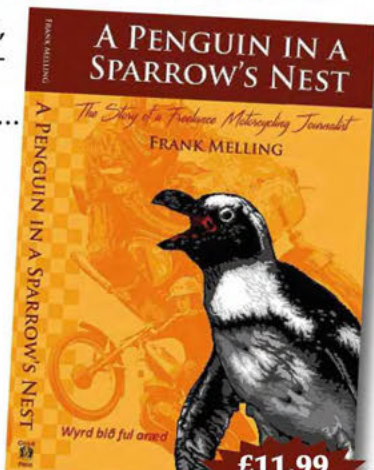
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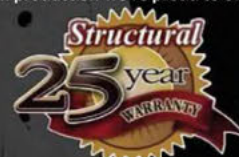
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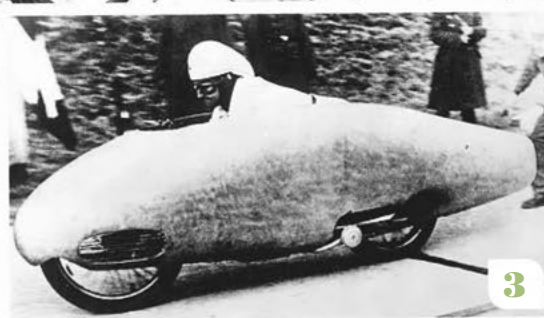
The famous picture of Georg Meier charging to victory in the 1939 Senior TT.

Words: ALAN CATHCART Photography: PHIL MASTERS

# *Blown boxer*

The BMW Kompressor was a remarkably modern and successful racer in the late 1930s.





**F**or its entire 90-year existence as a manufacturer, BMW has endeavoured to underline the overall excellence of its products by racing them against the best that the rest of the world can offer, and the German company's Isle of Man TT-winning European champion Typ 255 Kompressor twin-cylinder 500cc road racer was the first to do so successfully in international competition.

The Kompressor was the brainchild of youthful Swiss-born BMW designer Rudolf Schleicher, who was given the task of designing a supercharged 500cc road racer. Schleicher's new Typ 255 Kompressor design was developed during 1934, and made its competition debut on May 26, 1935, at Berlin's Avusring races held on a high-speed autobahn-based banked track. BMW's Karl Gall finished second, teammate Ludwig Kraus fifth.

Although BMW had been experimenting with supercharging for several years, the dohc 500cc Kompressor was its first purpose-built GP racer. Schleicher's design was clean-looking and light, with all major engine components including the crankcase and cylinder heads in light but expensive Elektron magnesium alloy, delivering an amazingly low dry weight of just 137kg (302lbs) – against 153kg (337lbs) for the much less powerful unsupercharged Norton single, initially its main rival. Measuring 66x72 mm for a capacity of 494cc (there was also an overbored 72.2x72 mm 590cc variant for the 750 class), the engine's one-piece magnesium crankcase weighed just 5.6kg, less than a stone. The built-up all-roller bearing 180° crankshaft ran on just two 35mm (1.38in) main bearings (so, no central support), each pressed into separate cast-iron front and steel rear housings spigoted and bolted into the crankcase. The long one-piece elliptical conrods, 140mm (5½in) in length, carried four-ring flat-topped Mahle pistons, each with three compression

and one scraper ring. These ran in seven-stud cylinders turned from steel billet, each weighing 3.4kg (7½lbs) and lightly finned, which were seated on aluminium plates. Compression ratio was a lowly 7:1, with the single 27mm Fischer-Amal carburettor offset to the right, feeding a multi-cell vane-type Zoller volumetric supercharger mounted in the nose of the crankcase.

The engine initially delivered 55bhp at 7000rpm, later increased to 68bhp by the end of the decade, running on 50/50 petrol/benzole mix with 2% castor oil added to lubricate the blower, and was fitted in a chassis that featured hydraulically damped telescopic forks. The arc-welded twin-loop tubular steel cradle frame employing a mixture of round and oval tubing was originally devoid of rear suspension, but for 1937 Schleicher – since 1932 BMW Motorrad's chief engineer – introduced a sprung rear end featuring vertically mounted plunger dampers. This was developed by the man who would later succeed him, Alex von Falkenhausen.

One year after its Avus debut, the BMW Kompressor returned to the race track on May 3, 1936 in the Swiss GP at Berne, with works rider Otto Ley finishing second. Two weeks later Ley scored the BMW's maiden road race victory on home ground at the Solitudering near Stuttgart in front of 200,000 spectators. But 1937 was the year it all came good for the BMW Kompressor, with handling much improved by the adoption of von Falkenhausen's 'spring heel'. After a one-two victory for Ley and Gall at the Avusring on May 30, the BMW Kompressor made its Senior TT debut

**1.** From left, Jock West, Georg Meier and Karl Gall at the 1938 TT.

**2.** Meier reacquaints himself with a Kompressor in 1989. He died 10 years later, aged 88.

**3.** The streamlined 90bhp, 500cc Kompressor BMW, Ernst Henne up, which on November 28, 1937, set a new motorcycle land speed record of 173.683mph.

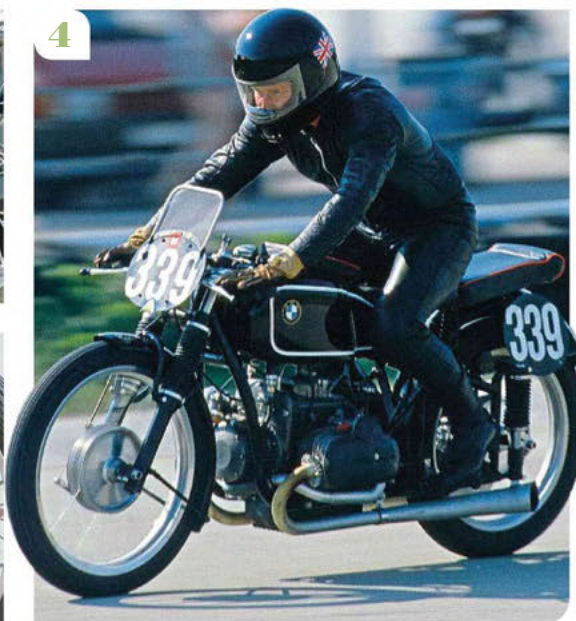
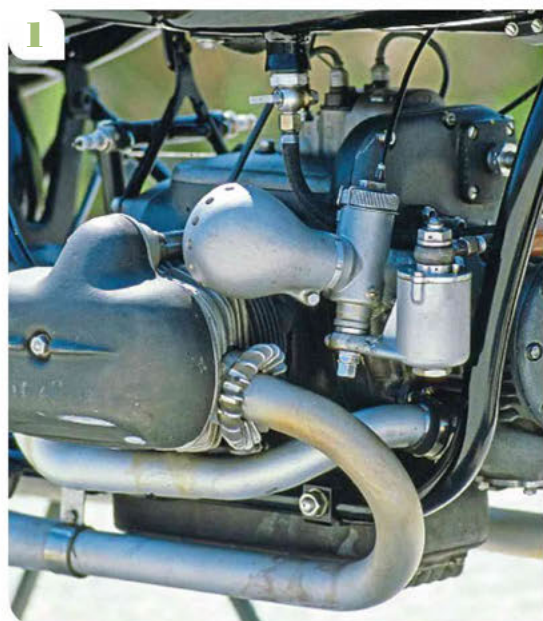


in the Isle of Man in the hands of Jock West, the sales manager for BMW's UK importer H J Aldington. West finished sixth. Karl Gall won the Dutch TT at Assen on June 26 and on August 8 won BMW's home race, the German GP at the Sachsenring. Ley won the following Swedish GP on August 15 ahead of Gall, while West took victory for BMW in the Ulster GP on August 31, where the Kompressor's 140mph top speed was decisive. On November 28 on the Frankfurt-Munich autobahn Ernst Henne wrested the World Land Speed record back from Gilera's Piero Taruffi, achieving 173.683mph aboard a Kompressor fitted with wind-tunnel developed streamlining. The record would last until 1951.

For 1938 Ley was replaced in the BMW team by a strapping Bavarian policeman-turned-army sergeant Georg 'Schorsch' Meier, who led Gall home in a BMW one-two in the first round of the 1938 German championship. In the first European championship race of the season, the Senior TT in the Isle of Man, Gall crashed in practice and sustained a fractured skull, which sidelined him for the season, while a stripped plug thread rendered Meier a non-starter. It was left to the trusty West to get a result for BMW, finishing fifth. Then Meier won the Belgian GP at Spa on June 26, with West replacing Gall to finish third, with the Bavarian 'iron man' taking victory again at Assen on July 30, ahead of guest Dutch teammate Bertus van Hamersveld in second. On August 4 Meier won his and BMW's crucial home GP at Sachsenring with teammate Ludwig Kraus fourth, followed by a repeat victory for Jock West in the Ulster GP on August 20. Finally, on September 25, Meier registered BMW's first victory at Monza, defeating Gilera and Moto Guzzi on home ground, with Kraus second, to clinch the European Championship for BMW and himself in his rookie year in Grand Prix racing. He also won the German 500cc title.

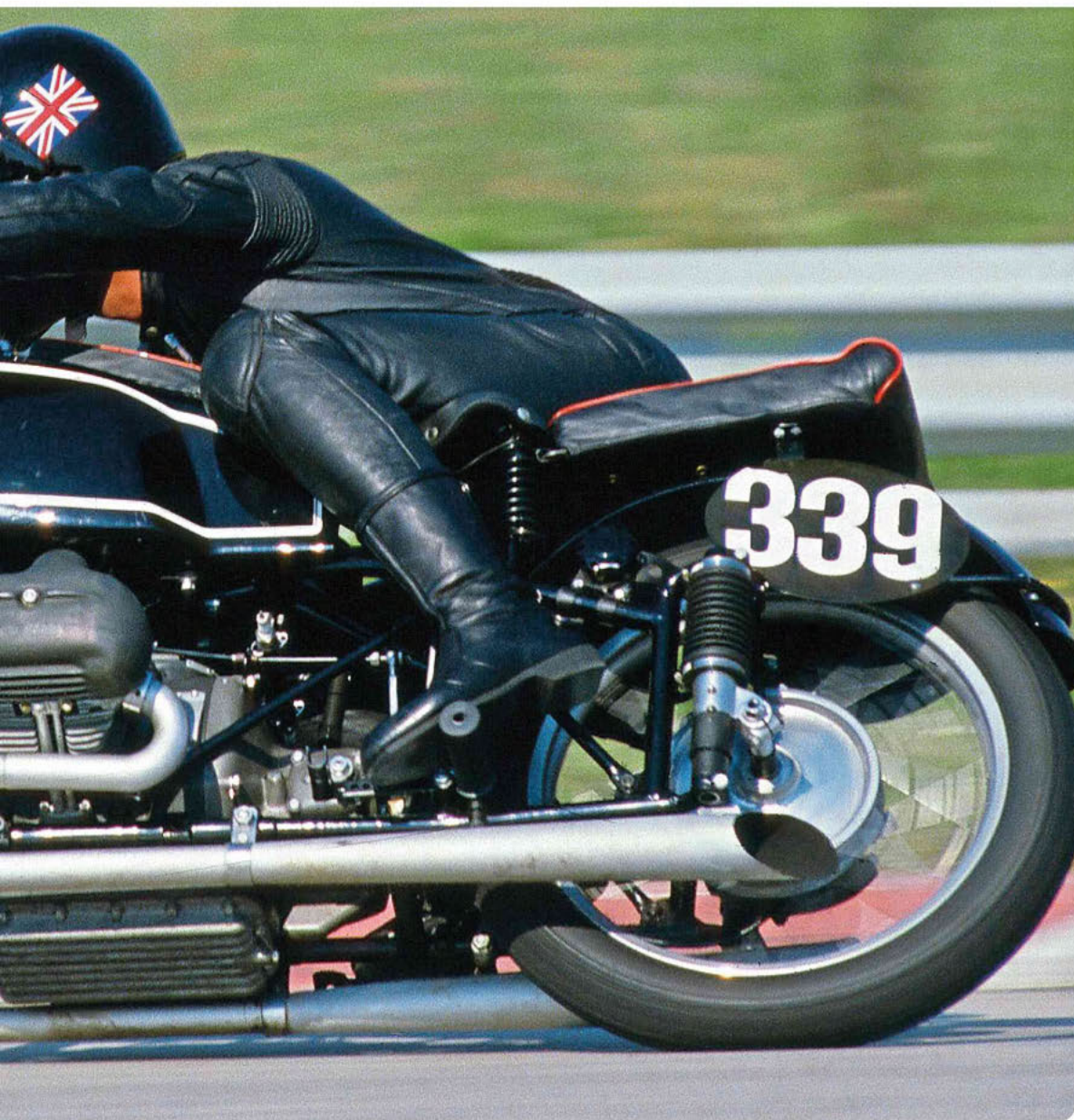
As 1939 began the clouds of war were getting darker. As usual, BMW entered a three-man team for the TT, but participation was put in doubt when Karl Gall crashed at Ballaugh Bridge in practice, and again

Alan Cathcart maintains that this is the best 1930s type motorcycle he has ever ridden.



**1:** There's just the one single 27mm Fischer-Amal carburettor. **2:** Rear suspension was designed by Alex von Falkenhausen, apparently partly in response to a remark from Hitler along the lines of 'So your motorcycles still don't have rear suspension?' **3:** Twin leading shoe front brake is to 1940s specification, though it has its limitations. **4:** Whoops! Alan Cathcart as the BMW gets a little bit out of shape.





fractured his skull – this time dying four days later. After some soul searching, the decision was taken that Meier and West would race, with the German rider leading his teammate home in a one-two finish at a record average speed of 89.38mph. It was the first time the Senior TT had ever been won by a rider from outside the British Isles.

On August 6 Meier crashed in the Swedish GP at Saxtorp, injuring his back and putting him out for what remained of the season. This allowed Gilera's race winner Dorino Serafini – second at Spa, after crashing at Assen – to overtake him in the points table by winning the German GP at Sachsenring on August 13, in spite of a four-rider blitzkrieg attempt by BMW to prevent him doing so. Serafini then won the Ulster GP just six days later, on August 19, this time in the absence of any BMW riders – but then on September 3 war was declared, and things would never be the same again. But because of the cancellation of the Swiss GP planned for Zurich on October 8, and the Italian GP scheduled to take place in Tripoli on November 5 – moved to what was then the Italian colony of Libya because Monza was closed for repairs – Serafini may be considered to have won the European Championship for Gilera, but

in fact was never officially recognised as having done so by the FIM, and never received a certificate to proclaim the fact.

With Germany not readmitted to the FIM until 1950, the postwar international ban on supercharging was ignored there until then, permitting updated BMW 500cc Kompressor models to dominate local events. With the help of two-stage superchargers and heavily revised internals, especially lighter reciprocating parts – all developed against the backdrop of massive war damage to the BMW factory – power was increased to more than 80bhp, allowing 'Schorsch' Meier to win four consecutive German 500cc National titles from 1947 to 1950, when Germany was readmitted to the FIM, and supercharging was finally banned there, too. Thereafter, the Kompressor motor was redesigned into the normally aspirated Rennsport engine, which dominated sidecar racing for the next quarter-century, powering to no fewer than 14 successive Sidecar World Championships from 1954 to 1967, and 19 in total, as well as permitting the late Walter Zeller to finish runner-up to John Surtees in the 1956 500cc World Championship on the Typ 256 Rennsport, ahead of all the four-cylinder Gileras. Not a bad record!

## FINER DETAILS

### BMW 500 TYP 255 KOMPRESSOR

#### ENGINE

Air-cooled dohc horizontally opposed twin-cylinder four-stroke, with indirect bevel gear camshaft drive

#### DIMENSIONS

66x72 mm

#### CAPACITY

492cc

#### OUTPUT

56bhp at 7000rpm

#### COMPRESSION RATIO

5:1

#### CARBURATION

Single 27mm Fischer-Amal carburettor with spline-driven Zoller eccentric-vane volumetric supercharger

#### IGNITION

Bosch magneto

#### GEARBOX

Four-speed with shaft final drive

#### CLUTCH

Single-plate dry

#### CHASSIS

Tubular steel twin-loop cradle frame

#### SUSPENSION

28mm BMW telescopic forks with leading axle location front, BMW plunger springs with separate adjustable friction dampers rear

#### BRAKES

200mm twin leading-shoe drum front, 200mm single leading-shoe drum rear

#### TYRES

3.00 x 21 Avon Roadmaster on WM2/1.85in wire-wheeled steel rim front, 3.50 x 19 Metzeler Perfect on WM2/1.85in wire-wheeled steel rim rear

#### WHEELBASE

1415mm

#### WEIGHT

137kg (303lbs) with oil/no fuel

#### TOP SPEED

140mph

#### YEAR OF

**MANUFACTURE**  
1986 from 1936-1958 components

#### OWNER

Wilhelm Schütz, West Germany.



# Kompressor Kreation

With it being impossible to acquire a genuine article, the only option was to build a faithful reproduction.

Only a handful of 500cc BMW Kompressor Typ 255 dohc models were ever made and they were never sold to private owners. A few of that handful managed to survive the war, often at the cost of their provenance since in some cases they ended up being smuggled out of the country as war booty. While it's believed between 12 and 15 500cc Kompressors were constructed in BMW's Munich race department (factory records were lost during the Second World War, so exact numbers are uncertain), the contents of the factory race department were seized by the French occupying forces in 1945, and disappeared. In the late 1970s one bike was tracked down in the USA in a dismantled state by John Surtees, and restored before he sold it back to BMW, where it forms part of the company's Mobile Tradition historic vehicle collection. Though often presented as being Meier's actual TT winner, since the BMW factory has no records of race engine and frame numbers, there is no way of authenticating this.

However, two other BMW 500cc Kompressor supercharged twins exist, having been built up using several genuine prewar Kompressor parts, and unsupercharged 1950s plunger-frame RS500 Rennsport GP racers as the platform to create pretty authentic Typ 255 replicas. One of these was sold for \$480,000 at the Bonhams' auction in Las Vegas in January 2013, and was formerly the property of Walter Zeller, BMW's 1950s factory GP rider.

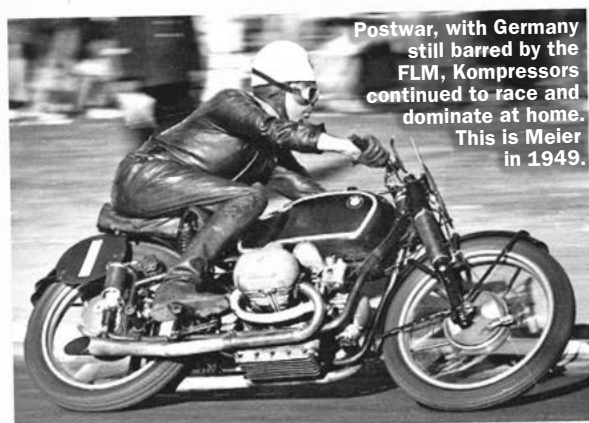
The second came about when former factory mechanic Gustl Lachermeier used his knowledge and remaining parts to assist German BMW fanatic, Wilhelm Schütz, in creating an identical machine to the Zeller bike, likewise built to the highest standards of authenticity.

"My dream was always to be able to ride a Kompressor," said Wilhelm, "but except for the Zeller bike, the others are either lost or in the hands of people who don't use them, but won't sell them either. Therefore since the postwar Rennsport is a direct development

of the Kompressor, I asked Gustl to adapt a Rennsport to Kompressor specification, as he did for Walter Zeller."

Lachermeier's name was the key to this Kompressor's creation. He worked on BMW race engines for more than 40 years and was a member of the factory race shop. Schütz's Kompressor is in fact identical to Walter Zeller's Las Vegas bike, which means that it's actually in early postwar German racing trim. This includes the later twin leading shoe front brake and clip-on handlebars favoured by Zeller, but also a strutted rear frame, adjustable friction dampers on the rear plunger suspension and a leading front axle location on the telescopic forks.

The basis for the Lachermeier-built engine is a 1950s Rennsport motor. The one-piece magnesium crankcase now has an eccentric-vane Zoller supercharger fitted to its front cover, which entailed the manufacture of a new crankshaft with the splines on the front end to drive the blower. Lachermeier has fitted the so-called Henne-kompressor, the largest available Zoller unit. This necessitated fitting leading axle front forks, to move the 21in front rim far enough forward to clear the fatter supercharger under braking or suspension compression. To permit the engine to be run on modern pump fuel, rather than the exotic petrol-benzole blend used in its heyday, Lachermeier dropped the compression ratio to just 5:1, in turn resulting in a power output of 56bhp at 7000rpm. But 68-70bhp would certainly have been on tap in the golden age of the Kompressor in road racing trim – about 90bhp for Henne's record-breaker – which, allied with the incredibly light weight, was



certainly responsible for the Kompressor's remarkable performance. The unblown British 500cc singles with little more than half that power output weighed at least 10% more!

Having previously ridden Walter Zeller's postwar Typ 256 Rennsport solo, I was prepared for the highly idiosyncratic riding style required to get the best from an early BMW flat-twin racer. I was also mindful that my 15 laps at Misano on the Schütz Kompressor were to be with an engine fresh from the Lachermeier workshop.

So, how did it go? Well, the supercharged BMW remains far and away the most sophisticated and modern-feeling 1930s motorcycle I've ever ridden. Compared with the 1950 plunger-framed double-knocker Manx Norton I used to own, the BMW steered infinitely better, both in terms of general handiness, and the superior way it rode bumps. But you do feel you're sitting on top of the BMW rather than in it, perched somewhere back over the rear wheel, and this does take a while to get







used to. The first time the low-slung exhaust touched down after a couple of laps at Misano brought some embarrassing moments in its wake... Straighten up quickly before it slides too far, lose the line in the corner, up on to the kerb, stand on the pegs and squeeze hard with the knees to fight the bike back on to the track, then rejoin the Tarmac before the onset of cardiac arrest.

Firing up the Kompressor, even with its lowly compression ratio is not easy, and requires the rider to be sitting on the bike from cold: this can't have been a good bike for dead-engine race pushstarts, quite apart from having the cylinders sticking out of the side to get in your way, no matter which side you push. The noise from the wide diameter, slash-cut, open exhausts is impressively loud, although with the direct supercharger drive there's none of the whine normally associated with such units. There's a surprisingly smooth build up of power and remarkably supple torque towards peak revs of 7000rpm – 6500 for my test ride on the newly built engine, at Wilhelm's request. The best compliment I can pay the Schütz Kompressor is that riding

it felt like being on a bike 25 years younger in design, a fact reinforced by the ease with which I was able to keep up with my Spanish mate Joaquin Folch's 1960 Matchless G50 in a straight line at Misano. Producing 5bhp less than the BMW for only a 5kg weight advantage, the two-decade younger unblown British single even lost out on initial acceleration out of the slow left hander leading on to the fast back section at Misano, only reasserting itself under braking and cornering.

That was when the fruits of two decades of further development became apparent, because to begin with the postwar 200mm diameter twin leading-shoe front brake didn't really slow the bike as quickly as I'd hoped, and stamping on the rear brake only exacerbated the inherent problems of cornering a shaft-drive bike fast.

If the rigidity of the welded-up frame and the effectiveness of the plunger rear end impressed, it was the Kompressor engine's supple power delivery that was most surprising. Apparently this was the reason for Lachermeier's choice of the larger Zoller

kompressor, which delivers more boost at lower revs and smooths out the power delivery – there's good strong power from as low as 2500rpm, and a very flat torque curve delivering a completely linear build of power all the way to my 6500rpm rev limit. There's no comparison with a less-powerful 'cammy' British single, whereby you must beware of megaphonitis and clutch it out of turns to get the engine pulling strongly – on the Kompressor BMW you just twist, and go.

"I spent too much time building this bike," stated Wilhelm Schütz after I returned to the paddock after my outing, and we stood there admiring his beautifully purposeful Kompressor glinting in the Italian sunshine. "It's taken me two and a half years of constant work to build this bike, but it's better I don't count how many hours in total I spent, or else I might go crazy!" Maybe so, Wilhelm, but for me it's a task well done. My Oxford dictionary defines a replica as 'a faithfully executed copy of an original article.' Few would argue that in achieving his ambition to be able to race a Kompressor BMW, Wilhelm Schütz has created just that.

End



# Learner



Words: ROY POYNTING Photography: TERRY JOSLIN

Perhaps not the most obvious of bedfellows, these two motorcycles underline just how learner-friendly classic can be.



# Legal!



In the face of it there's little relationship between the two featured motorcycles, other than their reliance on piston-ported two-stroke engines. One (despite

its German ancestry) is as British as roast beef, while the other – made a quarter of a century later – couldn't be more Italian if it was belting out *Nessun Dorma* from La Scala opera stage. The staid home-produced job is finished in a modest mist green, and its comparatively low-revving single-cylinder engine has an equally modest power output transmitted through a three speed gearbox. Its continental rival, on the other hand, is finished in fire-engine red (naturally), forces its rider

to take a racing stance, and has two extra gear ratios to take full advantage of considerably more power produced at much higher revs by its twin cylinders.

The one thing the two machines have in common, however, is an engine capacity of an eighth of a litre, and that's crucial because their owner is that rare thing – a mature learner. Actually, that's not quite true, Hampshireman Peter Fryer rode a couple of Hondas and an AJS trialler in his youth, but unfortunately





never took his test before the inevitable house and family responsibilities took over. Consequently he is now embroiled in a test system that doesn't allow unescorted learners to ride machines of more than 125cc, and gaining a full licence involves taking the test on a much bigger bike. That means an expensive supervised session on a hired machine, and while Peter did start down that route, his outing on a 600cc Kawasaki understandably proved too much, too soon – especially as it coincided with a period of torrential rain – and he has prudently decided to stick with the smaller capacity for the time being.

"I bought the Bantam in 2013," he tells me, "and I enjoyed riding it but had a bit of trouble keeping it going. Earlier this year a local dealer traced the problem to crud from the tank blocking the carburettor jets, and while he was sorting that out I noticed he had this Benelli – imported in 2000 by an Italian bike specialist – for sale. Apart from having a capacity that allowed me to ride it on L-plates, I was attracted by its looks and novelty. My wife Chris isn't really into bikes, but she encouraged me to buy this one because she knew it would keep me busy with the polishing cloth!"

I don't need to labour the history of the BSA Bantam, because just about everybody knows it started out as a DKW whose design was given to Britain's largest manufacturer as war reparations. It was introduced as the rigid-framed D1 in 1948 and – helped by a rock-bottom price tag – rapidly became a top seller, especially after gaining the option of rear plunger springing two years later. The rigid frame was dropped in 1955 but plunger models such as Peter's continued until 1963, by which time they had been joined by the 150cc D3 and 175cc D5 and D7. Production of the final model – the four-speed D175 – ceased in 1971.

Benelli history is much more convoluted because throughout its long history – from 1911 until the present day – the company has been the subject of various splits, mergers and takeovers. It began when Mama Benelli founded a business in Pesaro, where her six sons initially made cycle and motorcycle parts. They produced their first complete motorcycle shortly after the First World War, and a wide range of road and competition bikes –



**Above:** Peter Fryer (left) and Roy take to the roads on the 125cc classics.

**Left:** There's still something extremely endearing about the mist-green Bantam.

**Below** D-shaped speedo a sight which has been familiar to learners for decades...







including twin-cam racing exotica – followed until the Second World War, during which the factory was destroyed. Production of Benellis quickly resumed afterwards and one of the surviving Benelli brothers started the successful Motobi firm, which made ultra-lightweights, before being absorbed by the family business in 1962. The Benelli name was kept in the public eye throughout the next decade by racers that could have been a match for the all-conquering MVs and Hondas with a little more financial backing. And

the first imports to the UK began in 1973, at about the time Benelli was taken over by Argentinian tycoon Alejandro de Tomaso who also owned Maserati cars and – more significantly – Moto Guzzi.

De Tomaso's investment led to new products including the 650cc twin Tornado and the impressive six-cylinder Sei, which slightly pre-dated Honda's CBX. More relevantly, Benelli also introduced good-looking two-stroke twins of 125cc and 250cc, which were developed throughout the 1970s, and led to the 125 Sport featured here, plus a whole family of similar models. The quarter-litre variants were badged as either Benellis or Moto Guzzis and were modestly successful in the UK as novel alternatives to the dominant Japanese two-stroke twins, but there was little demand for exotic 125cc jobs, especially ones such as the Benelli without electric starting.

With the lower expectations of a classic enthusiast like Peter or myself that seems a trivial objection. Starting the Sport is simple enough anyway with a kick-start lever on the 'proper' side and cylinders not much bigger than a moped's; the only complication being the inaccessible location of the Moto Guzzi-style choke lever under the petrol tank. The clutch is

**Top:** Single sprung saddle adds to the classic experience.

**Above centre:** The famous engine, based on the DKW design.

**Above:** Saddle bag looks the part and is useful too.

**Left:** Bantam has a well-used and cared for look.



surprisingly heavy, and initially drags slightly making first gear engagement somewhat snatchy, but again that's nothing too remarkable by classic standards. It's only when I get on the move that the Benelli shows its more modern side, producing about the same power as a Tiger Cub, but doing it in a very different way. A burbling tickover is transformed into a wail at the twitch of my wrist, and acceleration is quite remarkable for an eighth-litre bike. It pulls reliably at quite low revs, but the gears naturally have to be used to get the best from the engine, and that's no hardship as engagement via the left-foot lever is light and precise.

It would be nice to give engine and road speeds at the change-up points, but that simply isn't possible. The instrument panel – which would be immediately familiar to anyone who's ridden a small Moto Guzzi twin – is neat and quite impressive with matching speedometer and tachometer dials, and warning lights for indicators, charging and neutral. Unfortunately the instruments are dysfunctional enough to confirm all the common prejudices about Italian bikes, the horn is barely audible, and in daylight it's impossible to see whether the warning lights are working or not. I just ignore everything and resort to hand signals while changing up when the exhaust note begins to sound like that of a Formula 1 car. And that's when all the shortcomings fall away and I regress to teenage hooligan mode making the most of the zestful acceleration, hairline steering and powerful brakes; the nose fairing, impressive brakes and Monza filler cap completing the 'racer on the road' impression.

Switching to the Bantam then comes as quite a culture shock, not least because the upright riding position feels much more cramped than the racing crouch imposed by the Benelli. That's owing to the pulled-back handlebars and shorter wheelbase of



**Top: Cast wheels and a single disc up front.**

**Above right: The Benelli's purposeful looking twin-cylinder engine.**

**Above: There's a definite look of Moto Guzzi around the cockpit area.**

**Below: It looks modern compared with the Bantam, but the gap between it and the Bantam is less than between the Benelli and a brand new 125.**



course, the latter contributing to an all-up weight less than two-thirds of the Benelli's, plus a feeling that the Bantam can be chucked around with abandon. To be honest I expected the modest power output and three-speed gearbox to result in a tediously boring ride – especially after the exhilarating Benelli – but the output and gear ratios are well matched and the whole experience is quite pleasant in a tranquil sort of way.

If this was a straightforward shoot out between two equally sized two-strokes it would be a one-sided contest of Italian stallion versus My Little Pony. But you can't really compare bikes built a quarter of a century apart when one was marketed as a sophisticated sportster and the other was intended to provide cheap transport, so any preference between them has to be based on nostalgia and riding style. But then again, a major appeal of both of these bikes is that their capacities suit somebody coping with our abstruse riding test system, and I can clearly see why owner Peter Fryer backs both horses saying, "I actually prefer riding the Bantam, but enjoy owning the Benelli because it's such a conversation piece."

**End**





**FINER DETAILS**  
**BSA D1 BANTAM**  
**(BENELLI SPORT)****ENGINE TYPE**Single cylinder  
two-stroke (twin  
cylinder two-stroke)**CAPACITY**

123cc (125cc)

**BORE X STROKE**52mm x 58mm  
(42.5mm x 44mm)**OUTPUT**4bhp@approx 4000rpm  
(10bhp@7600rpm)**COMPRESSION RATIO**

6.5:1 (10.3:1)

**LUBRICATION**

Petroil mix (both)

**CARBURETTOR**

Amal (Dell'Orto)

**IGNITION**

Flywheel magneto (both)

**GEARBOX**Three-speed (five-speed)  
(both in unit with engine)**FRAME**Single tubular loop  
(tubular duplex cradle)**SUSPENSION**Telescopic front, rigid  
rear (telescopic front,  
swinging arm rear)**TYRES**275x19in front and  
rear (275x18in front,  
300x18in rear)**BRAKES**5in s/s drums front and  
rear (10.5in disc front,  
6.5in s/s drum rear)**TANK CAPACITY**

1.8 gallons (3 gallons)

**SPEEDOMETER**Speedometer,  
tachometer (flashers,  
multiple warning lights)**SEAT HEIGHT**

28in (29.5in)

**WHEELBASE**

50in (52.5in)

**WEIGHT**

171lb (280lb)

**TOP SPEED**45mph (65mph)  
(both approx)**PRICE NEW**

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# Learner legal

The motorcycle test gets ever more complicated, so perhaps 125cc classics are more important and relevant than ever.

Words: JAMES ROBINSON

When Roy first pitched this feature to me, it resonated in many ways, not least because I recently spoke to a guy at a club run who was riding a rigid B31 and who explained how he'd had to do his test on a modern 600cc machine but; "I only wanted to be able to ride the C10 I'd bought!" he said, sounding somewhat exasperated. He'd persevered, but I can see why Peter here has decided to stick with his brace of 125cc machines. As Roy says in the feature, the Benelli performance is up to C15/Tiger Cub standards, while the Bantam is about on a par with many vintage machines.

Roy's experience of riding the Benelli also struck a personal chord with me. When my brother and I were in our late

teens we both had VMCC event-eligible 125s – sibling Simon had a 1967 four-stroke Motobi, me a 1972 TS125 Suzuki. We had some great fun on those two bikes, of which the four-stroke cafe-racer Motobi handled better, but the 'trail bike' Suzuki had more top-end performance. Doing 100-odd-mile club runs certainly taught us a fair bit about riding.

There are quite a few interesting 125cc machines about, particularly from the 1970s, which will provide lots of fun and experience. Riding a 125 is excellent training for riding old bikes, because momentum is king, and most of the time it's harder to ride a lower-powered machine than a quicker one.



Motobi 125 Sport. This isn't my brother's old one, but is very similar. It certainly didn't get left behind on club runs.



Exquisite 125cc Rumi flat-twin is a thing of beauty. It can be ridden on L-plates, after just a day's CBT training.



My old TS125. I was its second owner and was sold to a guy in the West Country, who had two more the same.

The pretty one. I've never ridden a four-stroke 125cc MV from the 1970s, but apparently they're not the liveliest. Looks the part, though!





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# Not as expected

When John Surtees fractured his arm in the 350cc event, thus ruling him out of any further racing, the 500cc GP event was thrown wide open. Even then there was no guarantee who would scoop the top spot.

**Words:** MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH **Photography:** MORTONS ARCHIVE

**T**he German Grand Prix of 1956 took place at Solitude near Stuttgart, and proceedings were going more or less as scripted until hot favourite John Surtees (MV Agusta)

crashed and fractured his arm in the 350cc race. This meant the young Londoner was not able to compete in the 500cc event later that day, and many thought his absence would result in either Geoff Duke (Gilera), Bill Lomas (Moto Guzzi) or Walter Zeller (BMW) securing a victory instead.

The 500cc race itself was originally billed for 13 laps, making a total of 92.2 miles. This was due to the busy schedule (which included a car race as well as four motorcycle races) but FIM regulations stipulated a minimum distance of 124.3 miles, so the race was extended to 18 laps to ensure enough distance was covered.

With Surtees out of the running, interest

was divided evenly between Duke, Lomas and Zeller. The race duly commenced, and Pierre Monneret and Geoff Duke – both riding Gilera fours – bounded away from the starting grid and threw themselves into the tricky Glemseck bends. Their dominance was short-lived however, as Bill Lomas and his eight-cylinder Moto Guzzi soon screamed into the lead. Duke followed behind, and behind him were Reg Armstrong (Gilera), Umberto Masetti (MV Agusta), Pierre Monneret and Walter Zeller, in that order.

During the second lap, Duke managed to creep inside of Lomas and Zeller coaxed his BMW into third place. The race soon became a pitched battle between Duke and Lomas, with Walter Zeller snapping at their heels throughout, but the mood of the race turned on a sixpence in laps five and six. First Zeller retired halfway through lap five with engine failure, and at the end of the

## Straight from the plate

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**John Surtees (MV Agusta) leads the field up the hill from Glemseck in the 350cc race. He would later crash and break his arm.**







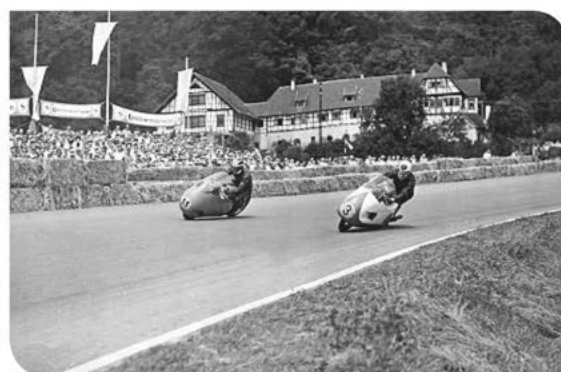




▶ sixth lap Duke and Lomas both pulled into the pits, with engine trouble and a burst coolant pipe respectively. Lomas retired for good, Duke took to the track again, only to pull in twice more. At this point any hope of a last ditch victory for Duke was too far out of sight to make any use of.

So, the top three spots were taken up by Reg Armstrong, Umberto Masetti and Pierre Monneret. After much jostling they crossed the line in that order, making it a day to remember for Reg Armstrong and one to forget for Lomas, Duke and Zeller.

Carlo Ubbiali (MV Agusta) was in fine fettle in this GP, winning the 250cc event and coming second to Romolo Ferri in the 125cc event. This would be the peak of Romolo Ferri's career, managing to fend off both Ubbiali and Tarquinio Provini to secure his 125cc victory. After Surtees came a cropper in the 350cc event the race was won by Bill Lomas, who rode spectacularly all weekend despite the unfortunate retirement in the 500cc race. ▶



Geoff Duke (Gilera) sneaks inside of Bill Lomas (Moto Guzzi) at the Glemseck curves.



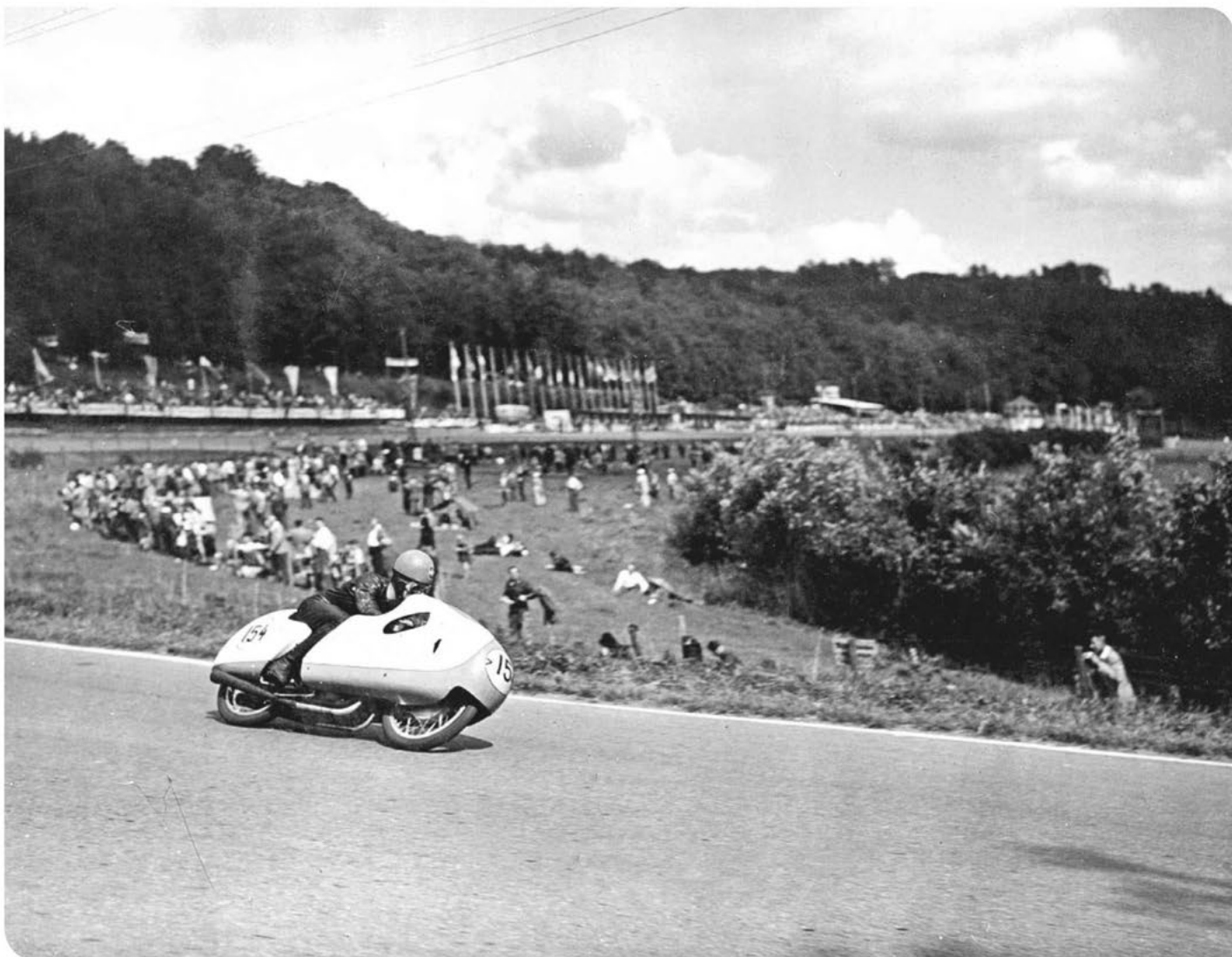
Above: An early Fabio Taglioni-designed 125cc Desmo Gran Sport Ducati.

Left: Carlo Ubbiali flying along in the 250cc race on his MV.

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On his zippy little Gilera twin, Romolo Ferri won the 125cc race in fine style.



Reg Armstrong celebrates his 500cc victory. Umberto Masetti also looks pleased with his result.

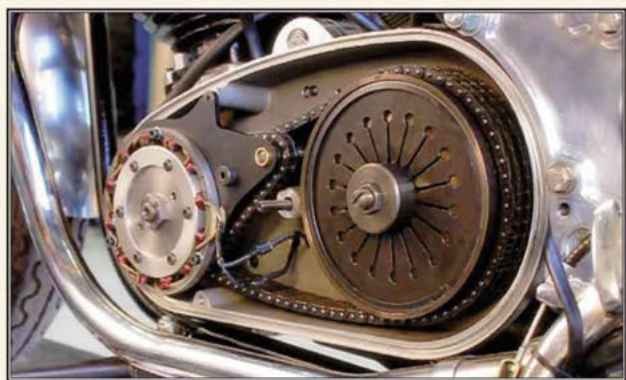
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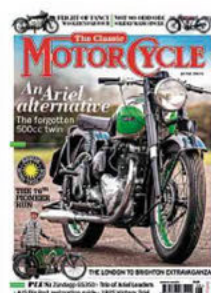
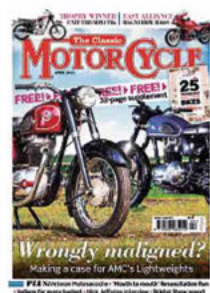
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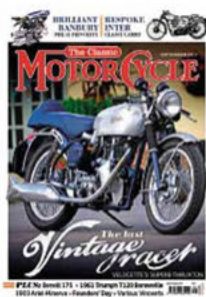
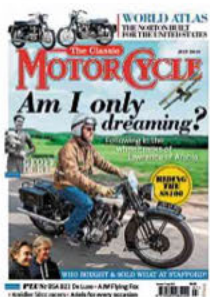




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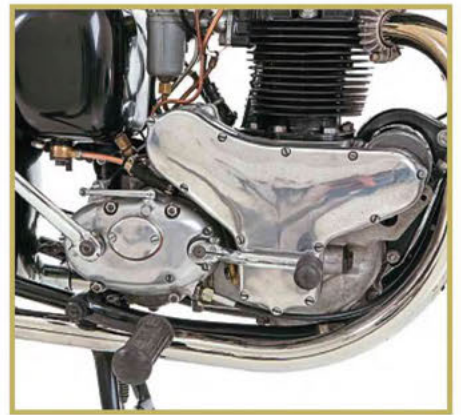
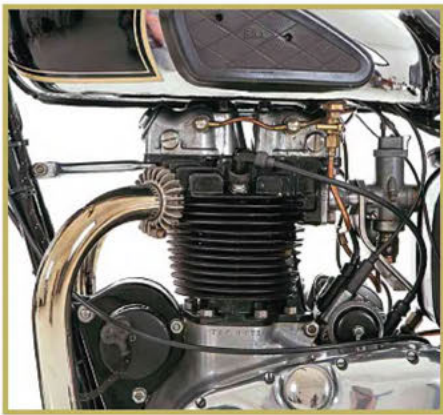
1948

# BSA A7

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# Well refined

Though it drew plenty of inspiration from Triumph's seminal Speed Twin model, the BSA A7 was just as well thought out and had a great deal to offer, including modern (at the time) telescopic front forks and a robust 500cc twin engine.

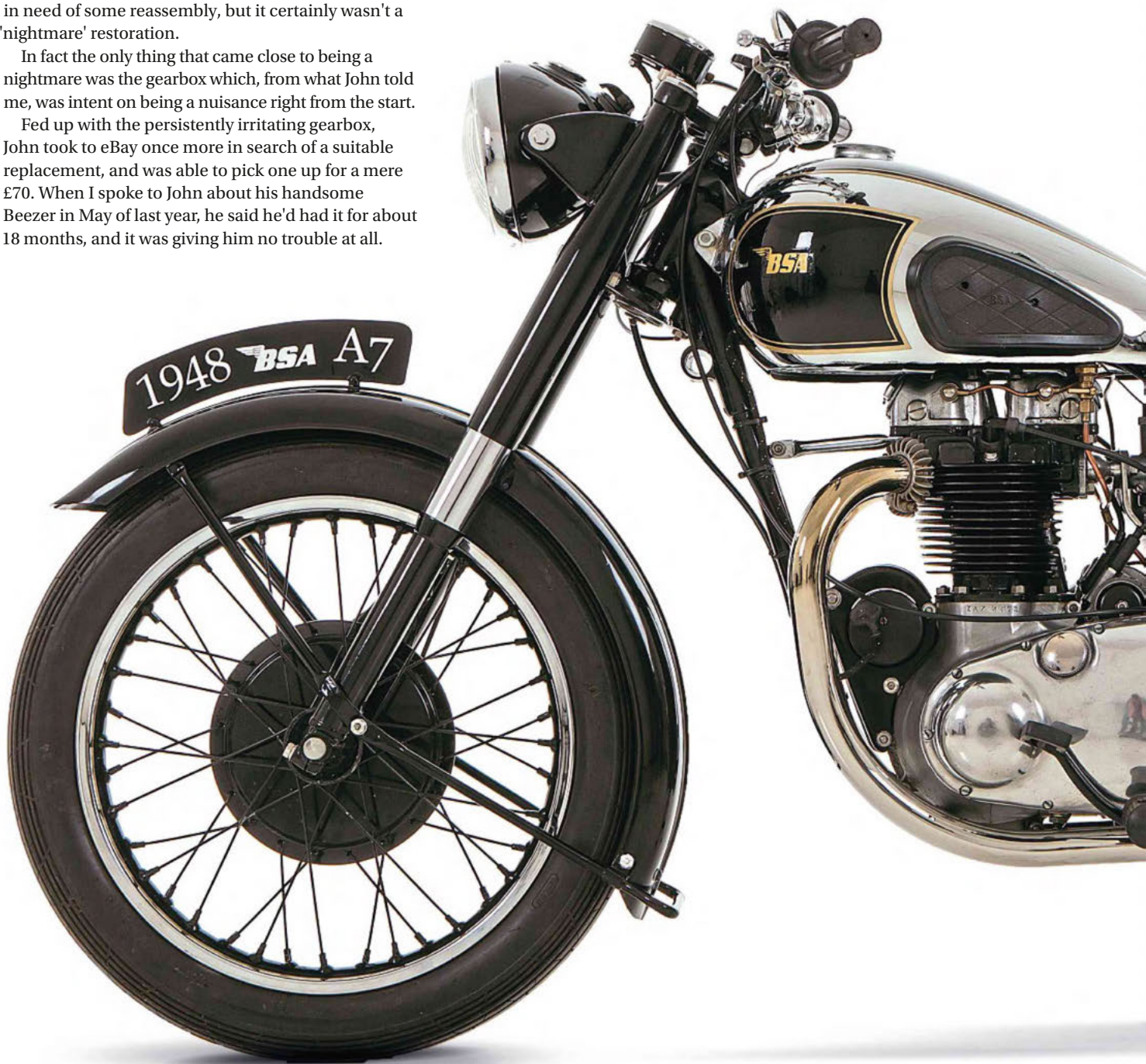
**T**his lovely BSA A7 belongs to John Carling. He found the motorcycle on eBay, and the chap selling it was doing so on behalf of his father. It was in fairly good nick when John first cast an eye over it; part-restored and in need of some reassembly, but it certainly wasn't a 'nightmare' restoration.

In fact the only thing that came close to being a nightmare was the gearbox which, from what John told me, was intent on being a nuisance right from the start.

Fed up with the persistently irritating gearbox, John took to eBay once more in search of a suitable replacement, and was able to pick one up for a mere £70. When I spoke to John about his handsome Beezer in May of last year, he said he'd had it for about 18 months, and it was giving him no trouble at all.

**Words: MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH**

**Photography: GARY CHAPMAN**





The BSA A7 was the product of meticulous refinement over at Small Heath. Prototype A7s were being built from 1938 until 1945, and a lot of famous names had a hand in bringing the motorcycle to life.

First came Val Page, famous for the BSA Gold Star, the Black Ariels of the late 1920s and innumerable other notable machines from the vintage and post-vintage era, who provided the basic design layout of the new 500c parallel twin engine. Then Joe Craig entered the picture. Craig had left Norton and joined BSA for a brief period (he returned to Norton soon after, once a dispute about their race programme had been settled) and he helped further develop BSA's new parallel twin. Some sources indicate that Edward Turner, father of what some call the first great British parallel twin – the Speed Twin – was involved in the development of the A7 at one stage or another, too.

The A7 had many characteristics that made it very appealing, though for different reasons than its major rival, the Speed Twin. It may not have been the fastest British-made vertical twin on the block, but

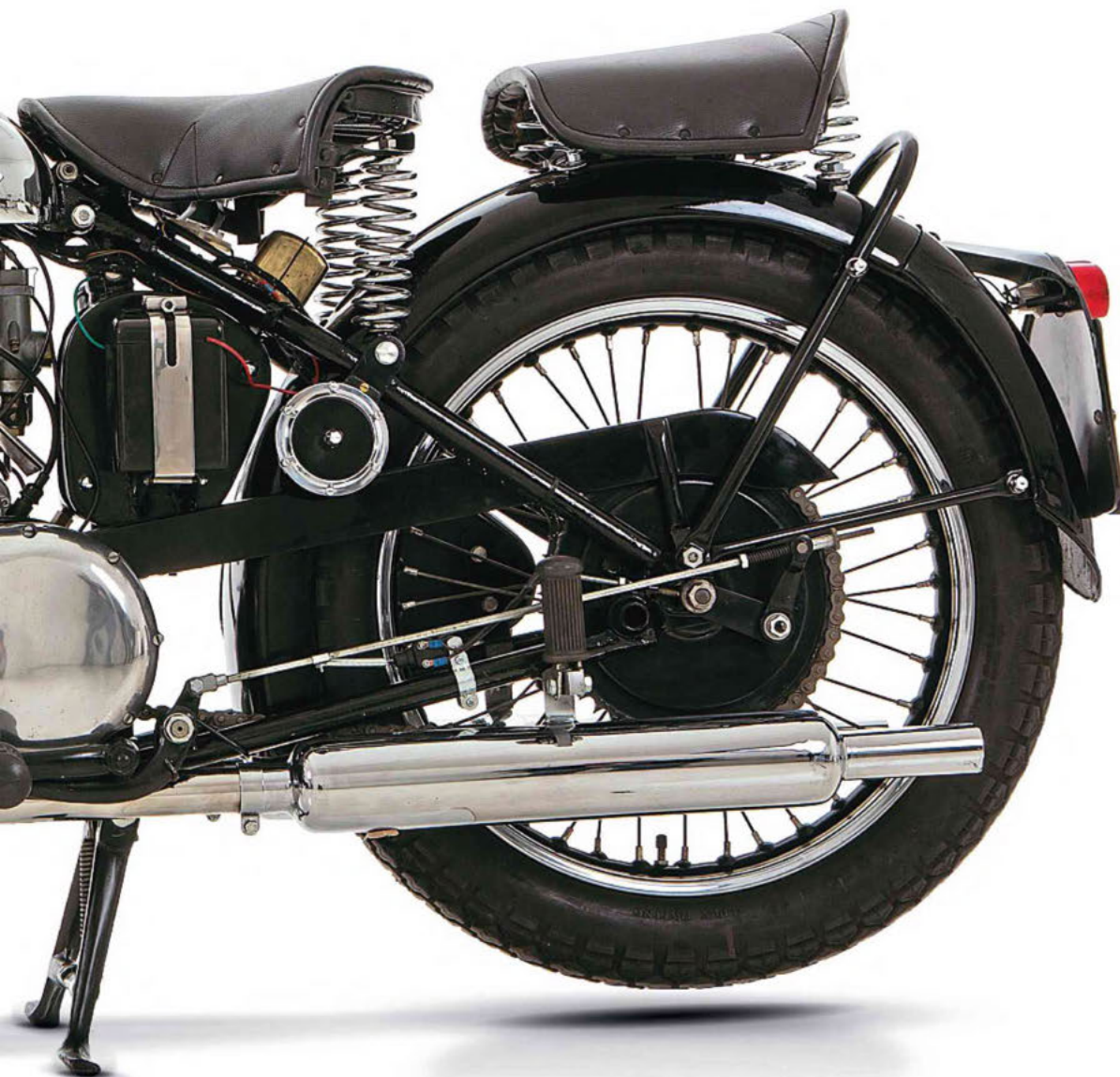


the power unit was extremely quiet and imbued the motorcycle with a more genteel demeanour. It was mechanically quieter than most of its main market rivals because it had a single camshaft as opposed to the Triumph's two, and had timing gears instead of chains. The engine was well covered, too, so little offensive clanking or whirring found its way to the ears of the rider.

For 1948 (the year which John's bike pertains to) the A7 was given a few minor tweaks, most of them cosmetic. The glass in the headlamp was domed for the first time, the handlebars were flatter and the telescopic seat-tube stand was dropped, the bike instead being fitted with a more conventional centre stand. The price tag had been tweaked as well; a new A7 would have cost £177 16s (including purchase tax) in the UK.

John is already thinking about what motorcycles he'd like to restore in the future. Back in May, he was interested in a restoring a Velocette. Only time will tell, though hopefully it will turn out as well as this lovely Beezer, whatever it might be.

***“The BSA A7 was the product of meticulous refinement over at Small Heath.”***



#### FINER DETAILS

##### 1948 BSA A7

##### ENGINE:

495cc ohv parallel twin

##### BORE x STROKE:

62mm x 82mm

##### CARBURETTOR:

Amal

##### GEARBOX:

BSA four-speed, foot change gearbox

##### FRAME:

Duplex cradle frame

##### SUSPENSION:

Telescopic front forks, rigid rear end

##### PETROL TANK:

3¼ gallon capacity

##### SADDLE HEIGHT:

28¼ inches



# *Touring in* **beautiful Brittany**

Touring holidays can be memorable for reasons both pleasant and decidedly unpleasant, though Mary Adams and husband Huw had a fantastic time in Brittany thanks to Roger and Linda Nicholls of Countryside Holidays in France.

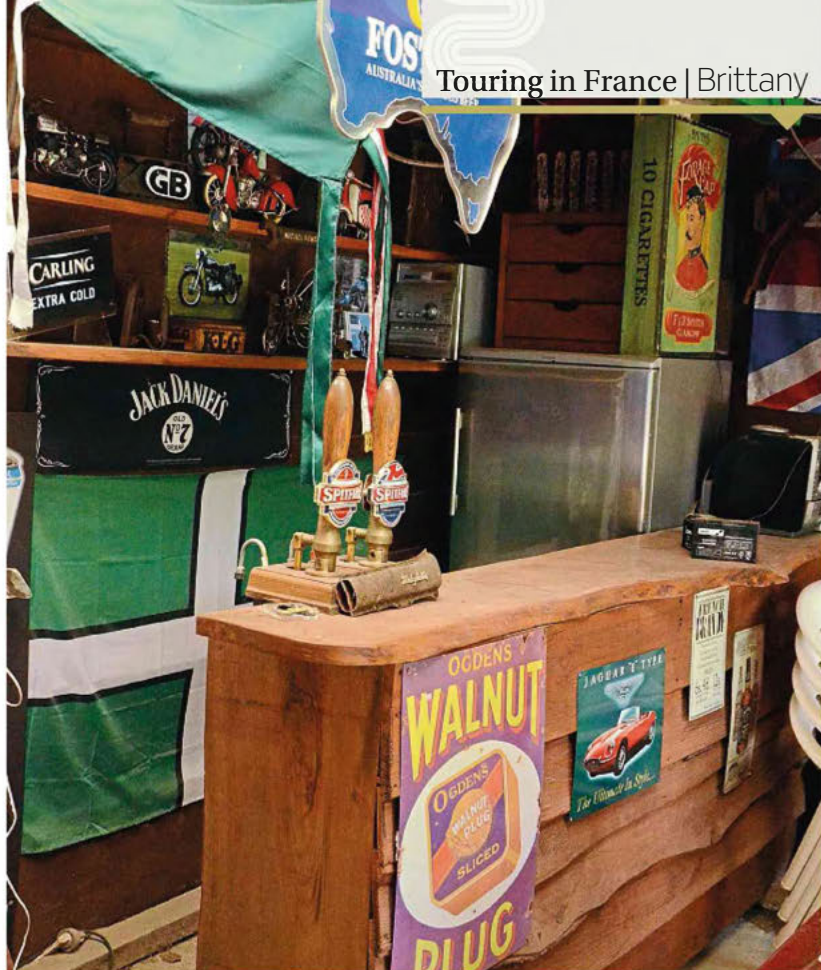
**Words and photography: MARY ADAMS**





**W**e (husband Huw and I) first met Roger and Linda Nicholls four years ago on a Moto Indianos Motorcycle Rally in the Picos Mountains in Spain. Every year we have been asked to visit them in France, and 2015 was the year that we finally did it. We took the Plymouth to Roscoff ferry and then had a 1½ hour journey through the Breton countryside towards Lanrivain, and then to the hamlet of Burlaouen. Brittany has glorious walled towns and strong rural traditions, and has managed to preserve much of its heritage and character, including unspoiled castles, forts and fishing villages.

Countryside Holidays in France is situated in the heart of central Brittany (Kreiz Breizh) in Burlaouen, and it is a 'biker-friendly' concern. There is a workshop to tinker in if you need to do essential maintenance, which is conveniently located next to the bar.



**Above: Spitfire on tap – not bad!**

**Left: Classic British iron basks in the French sun.**



Roger and Linda have lived in France since November 1983. Initially Roger went to France in 1980 with friends from art college, where he spent his days making lobster pots and leading a 'hippy' type of life. Returning to the UK in February 1982 on his old BSA A10 he was involved in a traffic accident, hitting a lorry after the bike had had a front wheel blow out owing to a defective new inner tube. He ended up in hospital and was placed in the care of Linda, who is a trained physiotherapist.

Roger and Linda have lived in France since 1983 with their two children, who were both born there. In 1998 Roger renovated a stone barn and began to rent it out for holidays and, as his children grew up, he decided to pursue a career in renting accommodation to motorcyclists and offer guided tours for bikers wanting to explore the areas around Brittany, and so, in 2005, Countryside Holidays was born.

Initially he began by taking the Triumph Owners Club from London to the Resistance Museum in St Marcel after they had failed on several attempts to find it! Pre sat nav days, you understand. He discovered that motorcycle tours were very much his forte and he started developing routes and finding good, biker-friendly cafes and restaurants. Roger even takes French bikers on routes and rallies as he is an expert on Brittany – they often tell him that he knows Brittany better than they do. 📍

***“We were given one of the chalets down near the lake which had plenty of room to park the van with the S29 BSA in the back.”***





Roger organises trips to places of interest such as the submarine pens at Lorient, Le Manoir de l'Automobile at Loheac – the location of Fort de La Latte, where the film, *The Vikings*, was made – and a Spanish fort in Finisterre. He will even lay on a French scrapyards tour where you can find many an interesting item.

Roger is careful to tailor his rides to motorcyclists of every skill level, and will alter the route and speed to accommodate the abilities of the riders and the age of the bikes in any one party.

He maintains that past experience working in a psychiatric hospital where he spent seven years as a maintenance carpenter has put him in good stead for looking after bikers; medication time is always adhered to, and he makes sure that there is always bread on the table, beer in the fridge and a cup of tea on hand if you need it.

***“Brittany is unbelievable for motorcycling. With its superb uncongested roads, you can easily travel for miles without seeing a single vehicle.”***

**Above: Accommodation in the chalet is rustic, warm and welcoming.**

**Below: One of Roger and Linda's chalets.**

Brittany is unbelievable for motorcycling. With its superb uncongested roads, you can easily travel for miles without seeing a single vehicle. It is very peaceful travelling through shuttered and sleepy villages. The landscape is beautiful and the scenery is as diverse as it is breathtaking, with craggy cliffs at the north coast and beautiful sandy beaches at the south. It is a 3km walk to the nearest village where you will find a traditional Breton bar serving local ale, and Roger can organise a brewery visit if you are interested finding out how it is made. There is a local town called St Nicholas du Pelem with a large supermarket, bank, cash point, bar, restaurants, post office and a baker.

Close to the accommodation on the property is the Bike Shed where no money changes hands. Roger's rule is that if you drink what's in the fridge, you replace it before you leave. He also is the most amazing cook. With Linda being a physiotherapist she works extremely long hours in her local village practice. So, over the years Roger has had plenty of cookery practice. He cooks various dishes and everybody's culinary needs are catered for.

The accommodation is brilliant, comprising three holiday cottages, a stone house, which comfortably accommodates seven people, a wooden chalet





sleeping six and a wooden cabin sleeping two people. The chalets are set in the woods with a nearby pond and woodland walk, and the stone house is situated very conveniently opposite the Bike Shed. All the accommodation – as you would expect – is bike friendly, and clubs or individuals are welcome at any time. Roger and Linda's house and gîtes are at the end of a track hidden by trees and a field, so there's no through traffic or neighbours to disturb the sound of motorcycles being fettled!

Roger will take you to local villages to sample the mouth-watering seafood platters and traditional Breton crepes, washed down with refreshing local cider. You will never go hungry or thirsty at this establishment.

We were given an amazing welcome at Roger and Linda's. We had one of the chalets down near the lake which had plenty of room to park the van with the S29 BSA in the back. We unpacked and headed up towards the bar. Thomas, Roger and Linda's son, had his birthday, so we were included in his birthday celebrations. We felt a bit guilty for gatecrashing a family party, but both Thomas and Linda told us this was normal procedure, guests took priority and everyone is always made to feel welcome at this establishment. We visited the local Resistance Museum at L'auberge de Letang neuf, which is a great museum with a lovely restaurant overlooking a lake, making for an idyllic setting should you stay for a meal.

The following day we took an 80-mile trip to Binic, with Roger on his 1954 Royal Enfield Bullet and his son Thomas on the '54 350cc Ariel. We enjoyed a delicious




**Above: The Bike Shed. No money changes hands here – you drink it, you replace it!**

**Below: The bikes form an attractive assemblage of British craftsmanship from the late-veteran Beezer to the classic Ariel and Enfield.**

'Jeff burger' and some wonderful homemade ice cream – just what we needed on a lovely sunny day.

After the long trip to Binic, the British bikes started to feel the effect of the heat and all three played up on the way back – the joys of owning a British bike, Thomas was told! Roger's garage and bar contains some really interesting bikes and memorabilia, and his flags from all over the world reflecting the people from different countries who have visited him since 2005.

Two of the main attractions of Roger and Linda's establishment are two very cute Jack Russell-cross dogs called Nip and Gnash. They seem to be everywhere at once, and they even escort you back to your chalet when night-time descends, just to make sure that you get back okay. They really are little characters, and both so friendly – they even feature on Roger's marketing material for Countryside Holidays in France! 





► If you want to try something different we can highly recommend the hospitality offered by Roger and Linda in France. You don't need to speak the language; they speak French fluently and Roger will get your shopping organised for self-catering if you let him know in advance. He is the most amenable guy, and will sort you out whatever your problem or query. He is a member of a local old bike club and is happy to take interested bikers out on its club runs, or join in charity runs or other events that might be happening at the time of your visit. Brittany is a truly beautiful place and Roger and Linda's home is situated right in the centre, with easy access to all parts of Brittany. Vive la France!

End

For more information on holiday and bike tours contact:  
Countryside Holidays in France [www.countrysideholidaysinfrance.co.uk](http://www.countrysideholidaysinfrance.co.uk)  
Roger and Linda can be contacted via email on: [rogerlinda@countrysideholidaysinfrance.co.uk](mailto:rogerlinda@countrysideholidaysinfrance.co.uk)

Right: Thomas with the 1954 350cc Ariel.

Below: The boys at Binic.





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# *Turning on the* **POWER**

On the track the new Greeves Silverstone proved itself straight from the box. Sponsors, supported riders and privateers soon were exceeding their expectations. Yet in a few years it was over.

**Words:** RICHARD ROSENTHAL **Photography:** MORTONS MOTORCYCLE MEDIA







**D**espite close season development by Leicestershire's Brian Woolley extracting 30+bhp (30.5bhp@7800rpm) from the Greeves-developed Villiers engine, Bert Greeves continued to describe the model 'a trainer'. And this amid rumours of successful early test rides by Joe Dunphy and Bert's own proving ride. The imagination of privateers and entrants was fired. Was Bert's unusual reticence the art of the skilled publicist underplaying his hand? Or was he really unsure?

The Thundersley factory, actually Bert Greeves and his cousin Derry Preston-Cobb (Greeves motorcycle sales manager), estimated they'd sell 25 racers in 1963, so the planned production run of 30 would satisfy sales and factory development needs. Wrong. Brian Woolley in his book, *Directory of Classic Racing Motorcycles*, informs 144 were sold during the year (some state 94). Brian's own Silverstone was one of the first sold, but he was pipped by Francis Beart, who took the first production model.

These and all future production models were considerably modified from the development machine. Apart from frame, wheel and tank revisions, the largest effort was focused on the engine. Arguably Bert, who knew how good the machine would be despite his 'trainer' claims, confirming a marketing ploy, sanctioned the development of a relatively costly engine when one remembers the proposed £300 all-in price ceiling – an inexpensive buy in 1963 when an obsolete NSU Sportmax was £700-900 and German Gunter Beer shelled out near £5000 for his ex-works four cylinder Honda. And with a final price ticket of £285, the Silverstone was the bargain of the decade.

So, why were the first season engines costly? Officially, the RAS had a Villiers 36A engine, of which Greeves replaced the cylinder head and barrel with its own design; fitted another piston, Alpha crankshaft and more. Other than cases, magneto and sundries, little else was Villiers 36A, yet Greeves had to buy complete engines from the Wolverhampton maker. And Greeves was

doing similar for some scrambles motors, yielding an ever growing pile of unwanted Villiers parts. You could question why Bert didn't use Starmaker engines – quite simply, his units developed another five-plus bhp. A real boost.

Sporting its revised exhaust system, 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>in Amal GP carburettor, four-speed gearbox and glass-fibre nose fairing, the new RAS weighed a measly 188lbs. In his Surrey workshop, Francis Beart pared more than 11lbs from his Silverstone, replacing standard parts with even lighter components, including narrower tyres. He also ditched the magneto ignition in favour of coil, powered by a tiny Bosch battery.

As the 1963 racing season started, a handful of new Greeves Silverstones were flagged away at short circuits across the UK, including machines run by Beart, Woolley and Frank Higley (some say Highley) ridden by Joe Dunphy, Horace 'Crasher' Crowder and Tom Phillips respectively. Having sold his 1962 machine, Reg Everett raced the factory entry, in effect the ex-London Show prototype reworked with a Villiers 36A derived engine like the production models. The marriage wasn't happy, as the more powerful engine with differing delivery characteristics didn't suit the prototype chassis.

Many histories cite the early Joe Dunphy outings when recalling the Silverstone's debut season but first blood went to Tom Phillips 'up north' at an Oulton Park club meeting on March 23, 1963, riding Higley's machine. Having settled the invoice, Frank instantly loaned it back to his Berkshire supplying dealer – EG Stroud – who in turned offered it to Tom Phillips for the Saturday Oulton Racing and Sport meeting run by the Wirral 100 Club.

Observers state Phillips was bemused by the new motorcycle, and as it arrived late Friday afternoon he had no time to try or fettle before loading for Oulton. Tom, entered on Ray Petty Nortons for his other races, earned glowing headlines the following week including 'Tom Phillips – six races, six wins' and 'Brilliant debut for Greeves racer'. Lining up the untried standard factory-fresh Silverstone, on which he'd just had a wobble up the road before he started race six

**Left: Off to a winning start. Tom Phillips takes two wins from two at Oulton Park, March 1963.**

**Above: April 2, 1963, Joe Dunphy in debut action on Francis Beart's Silverstone, at Crystal Palace.**



riding an unknown quantity, a few minutes on he'd recorded the Silverstone's first win, by more than ¼ mile, at 70.27mph. And hours later in race 20 he won again, trailed by NSUs, Hondas, Ducatis, Aermacchis, Velocettes...

Instantly, the legitimacy of the Greeves was doubted. A factory-fresh standard 250cc two-stroke single couldn't go that quickly. In the paddock off came the head. It measured 249cc. Off came the barrel and piston – no dodgy practice here either. In fact, the Silverstone wasn't breathing well because the inlet tract was masked slightly by an ill-fitting gasket, so, boys, it could have gone even faster! And for the record, Tom enjoyed two 350cc and two 500cc wins on the Junior/Senior Manx Nortons during his day.

While the Silverstone debuted brilliantly, the Gloucester maker Cotton wasn't left behind. Cotton had signed well-known Kent racer and winner of the 1962 Lightweight 250cc IoM TT, Derek Minter, as development rider and works entry. Often, Derek worked with development models rather than standard over-the-counter Villiers Starmaker-powered Telstars.

After a bad start at the season's opening meeting at Mallory Park, Minter proved the Cotton. In the early stages Robin Good (ex-Peter Inchley Ariel Arrow) led Mike Hailwood (John Surtees entered Ducati) with Minter down the field. On lap five, Hailwood powered past Good, as Derek shook off his bad start to carve his way past the field on the works Cotton into third place. On lap eight Derek passed Robin, and with the crowd on tip toes, he reduced Hailwood's lead by a second per lap to loose out to Mike by 10.6 seconds. While Hailwood won at a race speed of 79.67mph, Minter's Cotton broke the track's 250cc lap record posting 81.82mph.

Unnoticed by many, riders including Alan Dugdale, Bill Smith and John Dixon were testing the new DMW Hornet. Like the Cotton, it was Starmaker powered and weighing 210lbs the Midlands-built racers would soon be on offer at £295. Greeves, Cotton and DMW were aiming at the identical niche market, and it is not surprising they were priced similarly.

Returning to Greeves, Joe Dunphy enjoyed his public debut at the South London Crystal Palace circuit. During the day he won all but one race including his 250cc heat and final on the Beart Greeves, setting fastest lap en route. It continued the successful ways Bert Greeves knew from his trials and scrambles experience: wins = press



**Above: The RBS Silverstone Mk.2, with the Greeves Challenger-type engine. Picture from May 1964.**

**Below: The 350cc Greeves Oulton, introduced in mid-1968. Just 21 production models were made.**

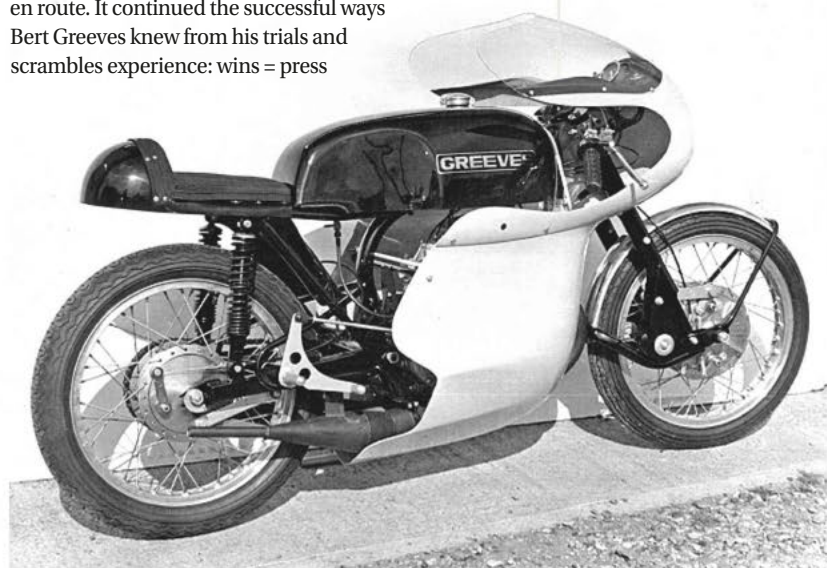
headlines = sales. However, not all enjoyed the experience, including 'Crasher' Crowder, who fell heavily in April and then again in May from the Woolley entered Silverstone, and Reg Everett, who all but totalled his factory model at Mallory Park. Much later Crasher was to admit his was in no fit state to race again only a month after his April spill and was also off colour as he bumped away the Woolley Kreidler 50 in the year's IoM TT and while Reg walked away from his crash unhurt, he was now without a ride, until Brian Woolley offered him his RAS.

Keen for publicity opportunities, Greeves supplied an RAS to the *Motor Cycle's* David Dixon for a racer test with a difference – in a race. At 13-plus stone, the tall Dixon dwarfed the Silverstone but with a Thundersley team comprising Ron Gill and Bob Mills, he was in with a chance, posting a few decent laps for the waiting cameras. Rusty on two-stroke matters, Dixon was last away in his heat by a country mile, then rode through the back/mid markers to finish sixth to secure a place in the 250cc final of this Brands Hatch Clubman's meeting. With a better start in the final, Dixon took a hard-fought third place. And many clubmen identified with Dixon's efforts rather than the excellent rides posted by the sponsored men. More good publicity.

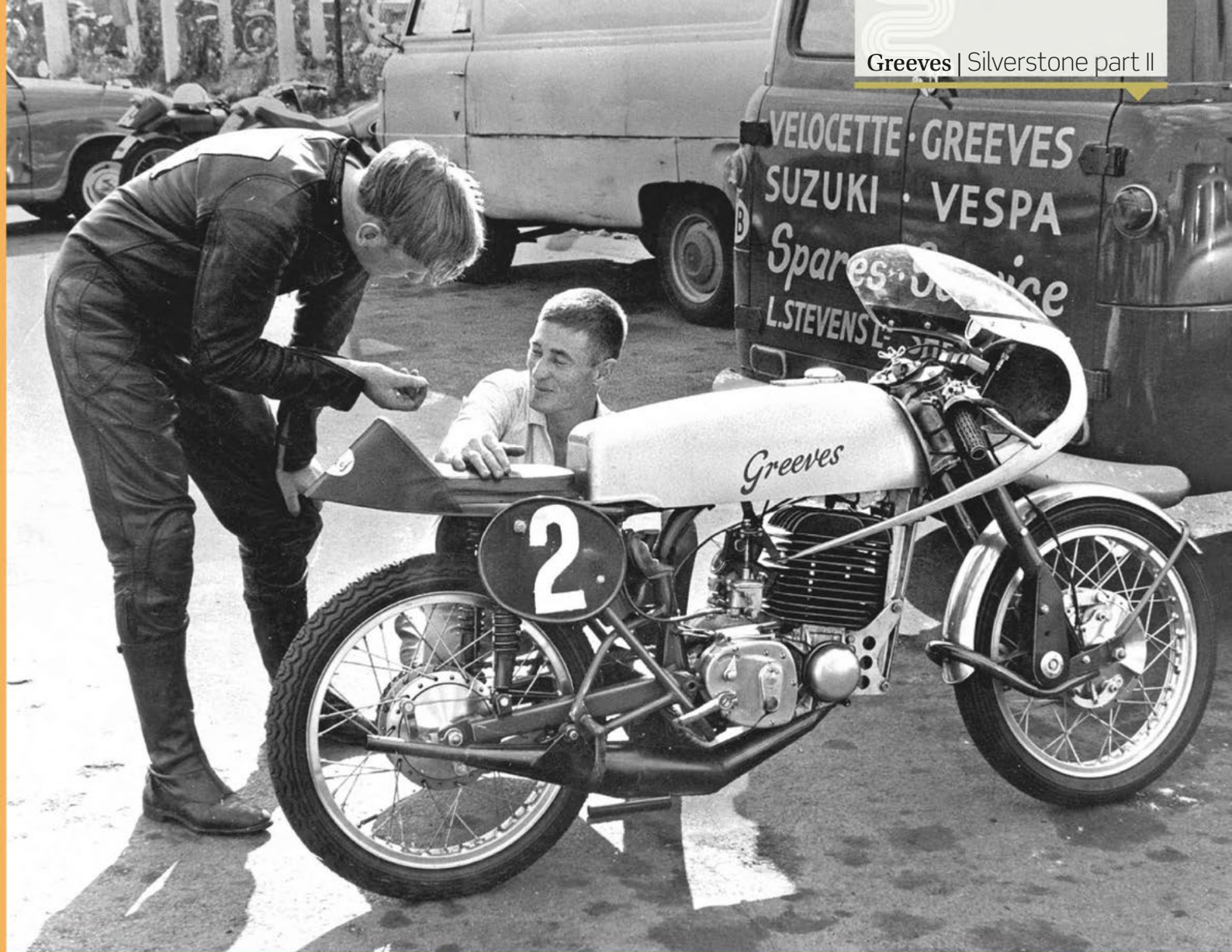
Another big Silverstone player was drawn into the scene by chance – so the story goes – and who are we to question a good yarn? Reg Orpin (of London specialist Velocette shop, L Stevens) was at Brands Hatch for mid-week testing with his sponsored racer Allan Harris. Greeves sales manager, Derry Preston-Cobb, was on hand to supervise Greeves testing when it is claimed Orpin approached Preston-Cobb asking if Harris could take a ride, and within laps he was near the 250cc lap record. After lunch, Allan pestered for another ride, then binned it. Reg is supposed to have uttered to Derry; "As he's dropped it, I'd better buy it." And so started the Orpin Silverstone episode, with Reg often claiming the only thing he knew about two-strokes involved grass cutting!

While the Silverstone continued its success through the season, its IoM TT debut was a near failure. From six entries, including Joe Dunphy and Reg Everett, only Allan Harris was to finish, in eighth at 81.47mph, more than 23 minutes astern of Jim Redman's winning factory Honda.

Whether motivated on economy grounds or solely a quest for more power, Greeves introduced a new Silverstone in May 1964. Thundersley announced a



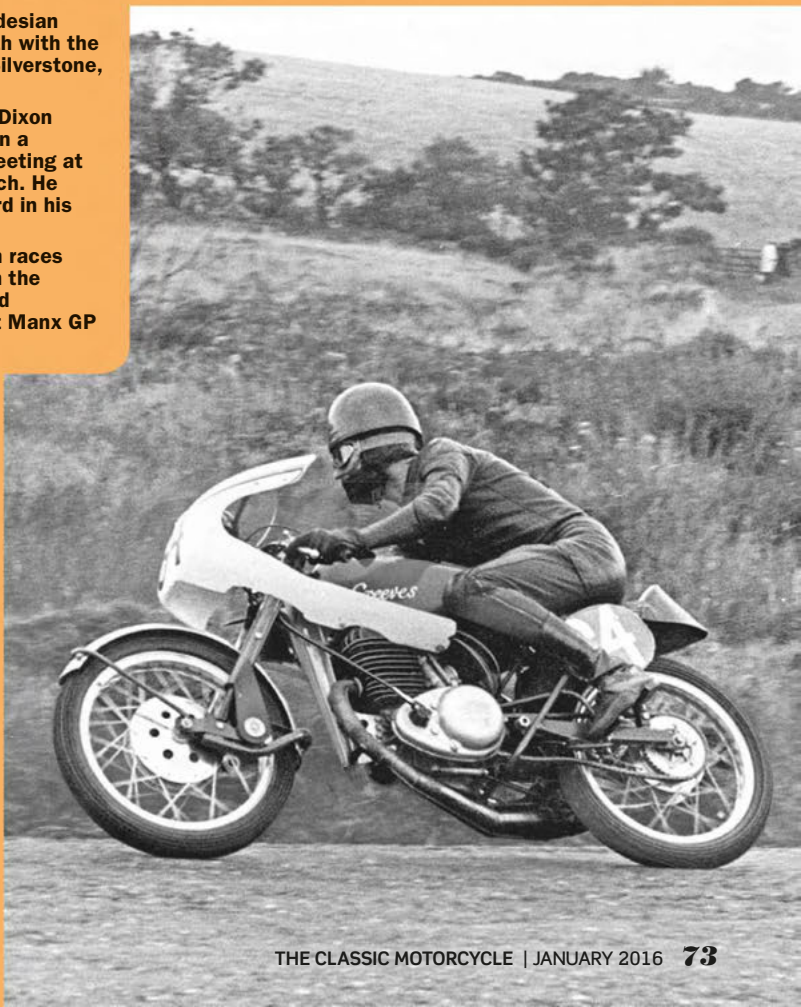




Above: Rhodesian Gordon Keith with the Reg Orpin Silverstone, 1964.

Left: David Dixon takes part in a Clubman meeting at Brands Hatch. He finished third in his final.

Right: Keith races to victory in the reintroduced Lightweight Manx GP in 1964.





new scrambler, the 24MX1 Challenger with an all-new Greeves engine – in effect a Greeves development, involving an Alpha-built crankshaft, Stefa flywheel magneto, Greeves crankcases, barrel and cylinder head, in February 1964. And the new Silverstone, coded the RBS, was unveiled in time for the year's IoM TT. Behind the scenes it is suggested Bert Greeves had been working on an all-Greeves engine as far back as 1958, but it is likely this would have been a 197cc unit.

Despite an entry of eight machines, both sponsored and privateer, only one Greeves ridden by Reg Everett finished the 1964 250cc Lightweight TT, last and eighth. It is worth mentioning that a field of 65 began the race, which was won by Redman from Alan Shepherd's works MZ.

Thanks to porting and exhaust development by Brian Woolley, the RBS engine pulled from 3000rpm, was on song at 6000 and gave peak power between 7-8000rpm. Early models developed serious misfires, which Bob Mills and Woolley remedied, and problems with the five-speed gearbox/clutch. Brian solved the issue on his machine by fitting a tougher four-speed box.

Back at base after the TT, Orpin forgot lawnmowers to set his sights on the newly reinstated 250cc Manx GP. Development, assisted by Bob Mills, was aimed at reliability rather than all-out short circuit performance. With Reg's rider Harris crashing heavily in August and encased in plaster for months, his pal Gordon Keith had taken over the ride. The factory refused Mills paid time for the Manx fortnight so he took holiday leave to go as part of Orpin's team.

Of the 86 entries published for the 1964 Lightweight, 14 were Greeves mounted, six Cotton and controversially one – Dennis Craine – was on a factory-built Royal Enfield. On race day three differing Enfields lined up. And at the last minute three DMWs joined the fray. Craine's Enfield caused problems as it didn't meet race criteria, though Geoff Duke persuaded officials it was okay as all component parts were production items, just not necessarily from one machine! So it raced, retired and no one bothered to protest.

On race day it was newcomer Keith, on what the period press described as a Greeves Silverstone Mk.2, who enjoyed the win at 86.19mph for the 151-mile race, and fastest lap of 87.61mph, by more than a minute from Rex Butcher's Aermacchi with Terry Grotefeld (Aermacchi) third. From 11 starters six Greeves' finished, many of whom had been helped by Bob Mills,



**Above: Manxman Dennis Craine claimed victory in the 1965 Lightweight Manx GP.**

**Below: Trevor Burgess did plenty of winning from 1965-67 on Greeves. This is Mallory Park in 1967.**

who became 'Mr Greeves' in the IoM.

The 1965 IoM TT was another disaster for Greeves with no finishers from seven starters (eight entries) and again Reg Orpin was on the Island for the Manx, this time with leading runner Dennis Craine. From the flag Craine gunned for victory, breaking the lap record from a standing start with 88.27mph. But as a sign of things to come the Yamaha twin of Brian Warburton gave chase and a last-lap misfire from Creg-ny-Baa on the final lap slowed the Greeves. Still, at the finish it was Craine by almost 17 seconds from Warburton, with Peter Williams (Greeves) third. Craine's race speed was a record 88.37mph with a new lap best of 89.48mph.

After the 1964 season RBS came the RCS, RDS and RES 1965-67. Arguably improved in detail and with uprated cosmetic finish for the RES, Brian Woolley later stated no real development continued and the work he carried out on his Greeves was ignored by the factory. However, proof of the pudding was enjoyed by Brian in 1966-67 as northerner Trevor Burgess rode the Woolley Greeves to many wins and places.

Seemingly embarrassed by the road-racing scene, Greeves dropped Silverstone production in 1967, then mid-1968 announced the 344cc Oulton, priced at £450. The prototype went well but the 21 production models less so. Just as the Silverstone enjoyed a rapid rise it also endured a brief final hour. In effect by 1967 it was under developed and no match for the tide of production Yamaha twins, Suzuki T20 roadster twin-derived racers, plus the Ducati and Aermacchis whose owners, sponsors and riders had continually developed them. The Silverstone continued as favourite for newcomers and old hands in club events.

Today, the sight of a Silverstone at the track, sprint strip or show puts a smile on the face of many of us. And with a good survival rate the reality is, the ownership of one of these pieces of history needs cost no more than a four-year-old sportsbike. And in case you wondered the Woolley Kreidler 50 survives too...

End





# Ixion's words of wisdom

Canon Basil H Davies was an extremely well-read and generally intelligent man, and had many interesting things to say about his experiences in the pioneering days of motorcycling.

A couple of months ago I wrote enthusiastically about the Motor Cycle Cavalcade written by Canon B H Davies under his non de plume of Ixion. I found it fascinating, but I couldn't honestly say it was an easy read; Davies's privileged formal education resulted in some extremely flowery and archaic language. For instance he refers to trials experts as 'Chamois' riders' and says they conquer "the craziest obstacles which nature provides to prohibit any form of wheeled transport... by daintier methods, the almost imperceptible twitch of the forefinger on a twistgrip which provides precisely the tiny push of the power requisite to clamber over a greasy rock step without generating the wheelspin which might halt the machine." Phew!

And his conclusions aren't always logical, such as claiming that while Wimbledon champions need "the frame of a young Hercules", motor cycling champions "do not reach their peak until nearly 40". That might have been typical when the book was written in 1950, but was surely the result of almost any youngster being able to buy a pair of plimsolls and a tennis racket, but having little chance of mounting a Manx Norton unless he was old enough to have proved his worth before the war. Strangely, Ixion noted Geoff Duke's precocious talent, but failed to see how it undermined his own conclusions.

While I'm nit-picking, I can't resist a wry smile at his comment that by 1930 a good motorcycle had "ripened into almost the automatism of a typewriter with any serious failure coming as an absolute shock". And among the 1950 roadsters which he reckons our "fine industry produces with knowledge, skill and determination" he eulogises the LE Velocette; seemingly unaware that demand for what he calls the "Everyman design" would inevitably fade once motorists could afford cars, despite noting how the inexpensive Ford Model T had practically killed the two-wheeled industry in the USA.

But if Ixion was a bit erratic with his predictions, he couldn't fail to be bang on the money looking back over his own riding career; and what really makes the Cavalcade so absorbing is his warts-and-all recollection of the pioneer motorcycling he personally experienced.

He records, for example that when he first took to the road in about 1900; "there was not one single square yard of either Tarmac or concrete on British roads". Instead they were "constructed of layers of two-inch stones, pasted down with mud by a 10 ton roller". And



**Roy Poynting has been a regular contributor to *The Classic MotorCycle* since 1995 when he entered and won a writing competition. A veteran of many restorations, he continues to be an enthusiastic rider.**

he even remembers lonely workers breaking rocks by the roadside; their work often being wasted if the surface was used before the roller could arrive. "In some areas," he adds, "especially limestone districts, waterbound roads could be extremely slippery in certain conditions of moisture. Cobblestones, tramlines and stone sets always suggested caution". Unsurprisingly he reports that the disintegrating effects of carts, horses and weather "soon destroyed the binding and the surface began to break up into every type of pothole."

Even worse was the dust nuisance caused by this method of road construction. Ixion claims the passage of a heavy car resulted in "beige dust clouds often a mile in length and 20 feet high," and goes on to say how the dust "made eyes smart, fouled ears and noses and went straight through clothing. Nor was the dust clean road matter. It was full of decaying organic filth - the pounded droppings of horse, cow and pig". Yuk!

The problems didn't stop there as Ixion explains in a chapter titled A Pioneer Takes a Ride. His house happened to be in a dip in the road, so the usual methods of starting the engine by "attaining some impetus and then vaulting into the saddle" or "pedalling away" were impractical. Instead, he normally pushed 30 yards up one side of the dip in order to get a flying start at the opposite gradient!

"Once away," he continues, "progress was usually easy and pleasant until one met a terrified horse or a hill". He casually mentions that a motorcyclist would have to push up inclines like Porlock or Sunrising, but adds (hopefully tongue in cheek) that "quite a percentage of pioneer motor cyclists resembled university oarsmen, in that they died of heart trouble in middle age!" Animals and hills encountered simultaneously naturally proved an impossible obstacle, and "on such occasions it paid to go back to the bottom and hope for better luck on the next attempt".

Despite all that, Ixion could still round off a chapter with: "The fact that I never for a moment lost my gusto in the new hobby proves that the tribulations were not excessive, and usually had their funny side." No wonder he became a legend in his own lifetime!

End

***"When Ixion first took to the road they weren't made of Tarmac or concrete."***





## *A brief chat with...* **Iain Gwynn**

Words: MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH Photography: IAIN GWYNN & DRAGANFLY MOTORCYCLES

Iain joined the family business, Draganfly Motorcycles, in 2004, where his expertise with computers and all things classic was put to great use. Iain established the website and the online shop, which now provides roughly 40% of the company's custom.

**I**ain Gwynn and his father, Roger, are the driving force behind Draganfly Motorcycles. Beginning as one of Britain's leading suppliers of Ariel spares and, in the mid-1990s, diversifying into the purveyance of BSA spares as well, Draganfly Motorcycles has enjoyed nearly 40 years in business since first opening up shop in 1976.

Iain is in charge of Draganfly's online services, which include a website, online shop and, most recently, a channel on YouTube.

Iain has been entrenched in the classic scene since he was little. As a youngster he was regularly brought along to the Stafford show with the Draganfly crew, though nowadays most business is conducted via mail order, as taking the van out to events became uneconomical.

Nowadays Iain makes sure that the company's online operations run smoothly, as well as trying to find ways to further increase the level of service that Draganfly Motorcycles can provide. This can either be finding new suppliers or working with current ones to increase Draganfly's range of parts.

**Above: Iain Gwynn outside Draganfly's premises in Bungay, Suffolk.**

**Right, top: An Ariel Leader up on the workshop bench.**

**Right, below: Draganfly Motorcycles has been in business since 1976, and is one of Britain's foremost exponents of Ariel and BSA spares.**

### **Can you tell me a little of the history of Draganfly Motorcycles?**

Dad started the company in August 1976 in London. We moved to Suffolk when I was about two and moved into the building we've been in ever since, so that would have been about 1984.

Dad started with just Ariels and then moved on to Beezers. Just after, Michael Freeman (of Michael Freeman Motors) was retiring, and dad said: "Okay, we'll buy all of your spares." That was in 1996. We acquired a lot of bits there... and just continued. It helps there is a good crossover with A10s and Huntmasters, it is actually relatively simple for us to flick between Ariel and BSA.

We've also purchased Craven Equipment, which we've been trying to get off the ground. I started here in 2004 with the intention of taking over from my uncle years later, because he was retiring.

### **What was your first classic motorcycle?**

Technically I didn't really get a classic bike until I took over from my uncle, then I acquired all the ones from Draganfly. Dad owns the front half and I own the back



**“When I was little my dad let me ride a 1954 James to the bottom of the garden once, though I promptly fell off it.”**

half. The first classic bike I properly rode – because I did have an old GS125 Suzuki which, in modern circles could be classified as old, though it was only 1982/83 – was a 1965 Ariel Arrow. I rode it to Germany, and so I did about 800 miles in a week on it. It was very nice, and a lot of people asked: “What are you doing turning up on that? It’s only a 250cc two-stroke” – but it was easy to manage, easy to look after and could easily keep up with traffic. When I was little my dad let me ride a 1954 James to the bottom of the garden once, though I promptly fell off it.

#### **Do you have a favourite classic bike?**

I’ve sort of got three. I’ve got the Ariel Arrow, mainly because I rode it to Germany. My dad’s got a 1939 Ariel VA, which is a 500cc side-valve and it makes cycling look quick, but it is in perfect barn-find condition as it were, it came from Queensland, Australia. It has a little competitor’s number on the front mudguard, which is lovely. I also quite like rigid Bantams. I remember I met up with the Bantam Owners’ Club at Stafford. Lovely blokes.

#### **From my research, I understand that you were instrumental in setting up the company’s online presence, particularly the website and online shop?**

When I left school I went to university to study computer science but I didn’t really enjoy the course – it wasn’t particularly what I wanted to do.

Dad and I had been talking for some time about the fact that my uncle – his brother – was going to be retiring at some point and I thought to myself: “Right Iain, imagine it; a couple of years down the line, you’ve completed university, what are you going to do?” My answer was that I’d go and work for Draganfly. So I thought I didn’t need to finish university, so I left there and then, and went off to Draganfly.

When I started in 2004, the computer system was ancient – I mean truly ancient. Before I started at Draganfly I had already designed a website for the company, so expanded on that and kept it going. We’ve recently started up a YouTube channel and we’ve got an incredibly professional video of us showing people how to check out their plunger suspension and I think, nowadays, more and more people turn to the internet for quick answers.

What we’re also finding is that more and more people are new to this, and obviously we don’t want to leave them behind or to ignore them. They can email us, look at our YouTube channel, website or even send us a letter for help, support and to place orders.

#### **Has the online shop been successful in helping you sell your wares further afield?**

It really has. We ship to six continents so the website is invaluable to us. Australia, for instance, can be 10-12 hours ahead of us, and so customers there either have

#### **IAIN AND ROGER GWYNN’S TIMELINE**

**1970**  
Roger passes his bike test.

**1976**  
Draganfly Motorcycles is formed.

**1977**  
Roger buys his first Ariel (1956 FH 650cc twin).

**1984**  
Draganfly relocates to Bungay, Suffolk.

**1996**  
Draganfly Motorcycles starts selling BSA spares.

**1994**  
A 12-year-old Iain rides his first classic bike (and unfortunately falls off it).

**2004**  
Iain joins Draganfly Motorcycles.

**2013**  
Draganfly purchases a significant quantity of stock from USA-based company Domiracer.

**2015**  
Draganfly Motorcycles purchases Lightning spares.



to phone us late at night or just go online. I think about 40% of our custom comes from the website, and we’d really like to try and increase that.

In the past year we’ve taken on someone to help with the website, and their job is to look after the IT side of it. We’re also trying to get more and more pictures online. We’ve got about 14,000 parts and I think I’ve ‘only’ got a couple of thousand pictures.

#### **Is demand for Ariel and BSA spares still consistently steady?**

Yeah, I would say so. What we find is, as the value of smaller bikes goes up, what people seem to be restoring is changing. That’s another reason why we’re looking to expand and diversify. As long as the bikes have a value people will always want to have them. You look at any advert out there on the television, if they’re trying to show something with a bit of class or something like that, they’ll put a classic vehicle in it.

#### **Do you find you sell more stock in the run-up to the colder winter months, when people are riding less and tinkering more?**

Not really, it doesn’t seem to make much difference. We can have one week which will be a record high and the next week which will be a record low. It doesn’t seem to have much rhyme or reason. August can be a bit quiet because people go away on holiday, and Christmas is a bit quieter, but we do close for a week.

End

**“More and more people are new to this, and we don’t want to leave them behind.”**



**CONTACT: Draganfly Motorcycles 01986 894798 or contact Draganfly via the website at [www.draganfly.co.uk](http://www.draganfly.co.uk)**



# Gus Kuhn

‘Old Father Gus’ as he was occasionally and affectionately known in his later years, was a notable speedway rider, as well as the owner and proprietor of Gus Kuhn Motors. He passed away in 1966, though his legacy endured, helped along by both his shop in London and the Gus Kuhn Racing team.

**Words: MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH Photography: MORTONS MEDIA ARCHIVE**

**S**peedway star Gus Kuhn was born on October 17, 1898 in Birmingham. He was of primarily English descent, though his paternal grandfather was German. Not much is known about his childhood (which perhaps isn’t surprising, seeing as it took place more than 100 years ago) but, when he reached the appropriate age, he served in both the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) and the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Nevertheless, it is for his exploits astride a motorcycle and, in later life, as the proprietor of Gus Kuhn Motors that he is best remembered.

Gus Kuhn was riding motorcycles long before the advent of speedway. In the early 1920s (and even before then, by some accounts) he was riding lightweight Levis motorcycles in trials, hill climbs and scrambles all over the country. Rough riding was very much his forte, and was something that stood him in good stead for his later speedway career, but he also enjoyed some success in the Isle of Man TT, an event in which he rode a plethora of different machines including a Sun in the Lightweight TT of 1922, one of Coventry’s Omega motorcycles in the 1924 Ultra-Lightweight TT, and a Velocette and Douglas in the 1925 Junior and Senior TT races respectively. His best finish was fifth in the Junior TT of 1926, a feat he accomplished astride a Velocette.

Gus was a competitor in the first speedway event to take place in Britain. This was at High Beech in 1928. Gus was quite the family man at this point, too, with a wife and four daughters to support. He identified that a sojourn into speedway might be a particularly profitable career move, especially for somebody with as much off-road riding expertise as he had. He joined Stamford Bridge and became captain, and this is where the beginning of his legacy was born. He was an extremely talented speedway rider and was rarely defeated during his tenure at Stamford Bridge. He even rode in the first ever International ‘Test Match’, representing England when they took on Australia in 1930.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Gus Kuhn was up for any caper on two wheels. One such story tells of when he rode the Wall of Death for a publicity stunt – against a roller skater! One thing that is universally accepted is that Gus was a very talented mechanic, and

*“Gus Kuhn was an extremely talented speedway rider, seldom defeated.”*

would always fix up his own machines before and after he raced. Stamford Bridge closed in 1932, and from here he joined the Wimbledon Dons, where he stayed until 1937. The year 1932 was a big one for Gus; not only owing to the closure of the Stamford Bridge team, which culminated in his move to Wimbledon, but he also started his own company, Gus Kuhn Motors, that same year. Initially the company had premises on Paradise Road and just around the corner on Clapham Road. These premises were the workshop and showroom respectively, though both were demolished in the 1950s to make room for a block of flats.

As soon as the Second World War ended Gus bought new showroom premises across the road from his original showroom. Marian – one of Gus’ daughters – soon took up an administration position at Gus Kuhn Motors, and the family atmosphere at the shop was further strengthened, but when Gus’ wife fell ill he decided to delegate responsibility for the daily operations of the shop to a chap called Vincent Davey, who had been recommended by a friend. Gus left to look after his wife, and so Davey became the captain of the good ship Gus Kuhn Motors in 1948.

Gus’ business enterprise ticked over nicely, and he still competed in the occasional trial or hill climb. He was still doing a bit of speedway at this point too, but he had no club association and so it was largely for fun. His last known affiliation with a club was with the Southampton Saints in 1939. Meanwhile at Gus Kuhn Motors, Vincent completely overhauled the London premises and helped turn it into a more profitable organisation. He was managing director at this point, and Gus was free to spend time with his loved ones in what would unfortunately be the twilight of his life.

Gus passed away on August 30, 1966 at age 67. He had been ill for some time and so his passing, though regrettably early, was not entirely unexpected. Two years after his death Gus Kuhn Racing was born, and the race team used the new Norton Commando. The team endured until 1979. Many top racers rode for Gus Kuhn Racing, including Ken Redfern, Dave Croxford and Mick Andrew.

Fondly remembered by all who knew him, Gus’ his name is still emblazoned above his old premises on Clapham Road as lasting reminder of ‘Old Father Gus.’

**A very young-looking Gus Kuhn taking a break in his race leathers.**

**End**







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## The restoration period

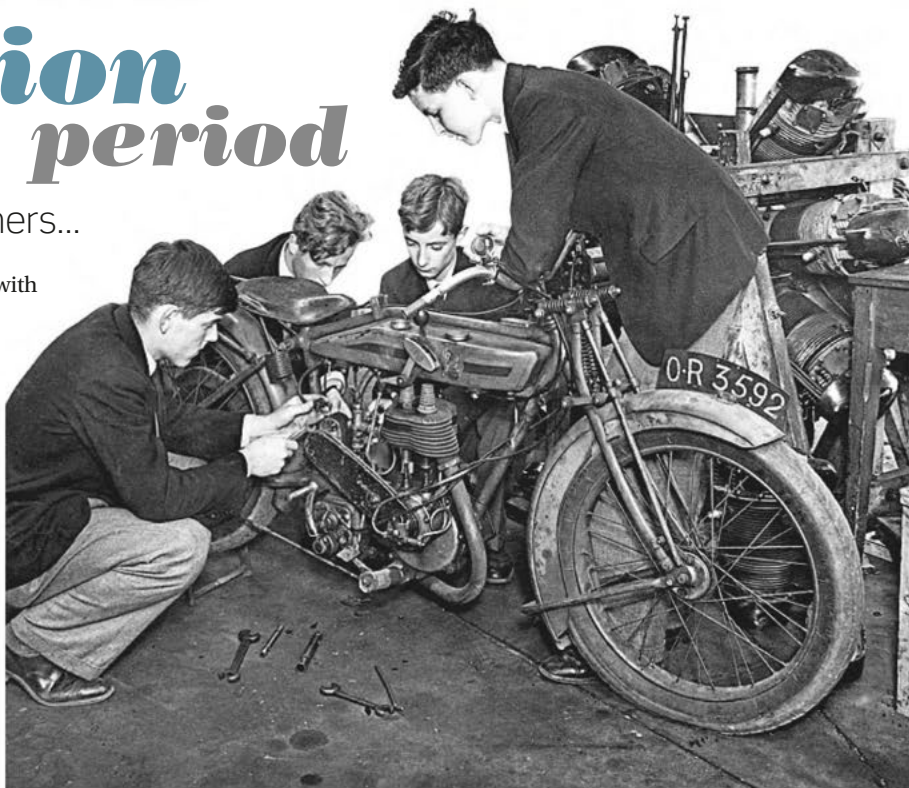
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As the riding season reaches its natural conclusion, with long, dark, winter nights and salted roads, attention invariably turns to readying machinery for next season. Now is the time to tackle all those little five minute jobs which have been put off as we make do and mend during the summer months, in an effort to keep the show on the road.

That irritating oil leak you've put up with all year? Well, now's the time to sort it. Slightly dragging clutch and stiff gearchange? Put it off no longer, set to and rectify. Uneven tickover? Get those carbs balanced correctly, or even invest in new ones – the difference it makes is often staggering.

Once all those tasks have been attended to, and everything is back to its best, perhaps it's also the time to contemplate making a start on the project you're to begin 'one day'...

End



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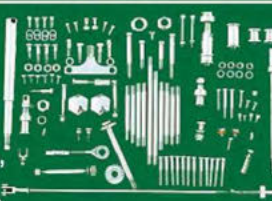
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# Worrying about the workshop

Many of us classic bike buffs keep our prized machines safely under lock and key to prevent insidious characters from pilfering them under cover of night, but sometimes the contents of our workshops can also be a target to the light-fingered.

**L**ast night I was reading a report in the local paper about a chap who had his workshop completely cleared out by burglars. I know worse things happen, but this is particularly nasty, because a workshop is such a personal thing. There was not much detail in the story but it was sufficient to get me thinking: "If I had to start all over again with an empty shed what would I choose to replace first?"

Before I even started considering tools I reckoned that I would begin with modifications to the shed itself. I've always regretted not building what I term a 'dirty area'. Into this would go a blast cabinet and a strip bench; somewhere that initial disassembly and cleaning could be done without spreading all the dust, dirt and oily detritus into the rest of the shed, this inevitably covering what has already been restored with a fine layer of nastiness.

I never did get around to buying a proper motorcycle workbench either, resorting to sitting on the floor when it came to things like engine and gearbox oil. That was never entirely satisfactory, so my next purchase would be one of these. I can only imagine how much easier life would be.

Tools would be a given. At the very minimum I'd plump for nice sets of combination spanners in all imperial and metric sizes, ideally two of each of the more useful ones – like ½ inch – plus top quality sockets to match.

After 20 or so years of owning one, I would be unable to live without a lathe. I resort to mine three evenings out of five for a variety of different jobs, such as making one-off bolts or simple spacers. After many years with a little Myford I bought a larger Boxford 500 VSL, which I love. This would need to be directly replaced. While I was at it, a friend of mine owns a Boxford milling machine of similar age to the lathe. I've been gently hinting that it needs to be rehomed, and this would be the ideal opportunity to pile on the pressure and get it into my lair.

Over the years I have also accumulated a lot of air tools, everything from air-screwdrivers through to impact wrenches and on to grinders. On mature



**Jerry Thurston bought his first vintage motorcycle when he was 17. For a time he was *The Classic Motorcycle* advertising manager. Now 30 years on from buying his first old bike, Jerry still owns and loves them and is especially fond of fast, noisy flat-trackers.**

reflection I wouldn't be replacing anything but the grinders, everything else is just a bit too brutal.

My imagined re-equip would also be the ideal opportunity to reduce some of the clutter. I do wonder if I would replace some of the larger items that have found their way into the mix. A 25-ton shop-press is useful when it's needed but it's not needed often, and the same goes for my tool cabinets. I have two. One is filled with anything but useful tools, while the other contains everything else, most filed in the wrong drawers.

I started this column thinking that, while it would undoubtedly be a horrible thing to have the contents of one's workshop stolen, providing you were adequately insured (and there is the rub) it could be something that you could recover from, and maybe even an opportunity to change and improve it.

But as I continued to write I started thinking about all the stuff that I don't consider until I need it, the bits and bobs that I take for granted. Take my beloved lathe for instance; it has a plethora of associated gear like a big rack of collets, bought for a song at the time, but which, (if you could find them) second-hand, are over £5 each, steadies, extra gearing to convert from imperial to metric, the list goes on.

Then there are all my special tools, either bought or made, and all of the extras I have accumulated. I reckon that if I had to start again today I would spend five years going for a tool that I used to own but is now no longer there. The reality is that I could never adequately replace the contents of a workshop that's taken some 35 years to build up.

This has made me rethink a couple of things, firstly my security arrangements. Big locks are all very well, but if a burglar is sufficiently determined then they are not much of an obstacle, so I've gone out and spent my Christmas bonus on an alarm, which is mains powered and has a battery backup. It's sensitive enough to detect a human being, but not so much that the shed mice set it off every evening. Secondly, I'm going to take out a standalone insurance policy for the workshop. For years I have had nice agreed value policies for my motorcycles but let my workshop fend for itself under a half-imagined clause in the house policy, when its contents are probably worth more than all the bikes put together. I must have been mad!

I'd be willing to wager that most of us are woefully underinsured when it came to the contents of our workshops. My resolution for 2016 is, therefore, to become one of the small percentage who are properly covered!

**End**

***"As I continued to write I started thinking about all the stuff that I don't consider until I need it."***





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EPISODE  
**ONE**

# *A Social History of Motorcycling*



## ***The Pioneers*** *(1901 to 1924)*

In this series of extracts from his forthcoming book, Mike Lewis looks at the evolution of social motorcycling in Britain and the USA.

**Words:** MIKE LEWIS **Photography:** MORTONS MEDIA GROUP

**I**n December 12, 1896, an exciting new mode of transport featured on the front cover of *Scientific American*. Described as a 'motor cycle using benzine' and manufactured by Hildebrand & Wolfmüller in Munich, Germany since 1894, the purpose-built machine was the first of its kind to reach a mass market. But although the company had big export plans for its twin-cylinder Motorrad, owner dissatisfaction with a complex starting procedure condemned it to a short production life.

Early motorcycle builders in Britain and the USA generally tried to attach a proprietary single-cylinder petrol engine to a variant of the safety bicycle chassis, with established cycle firms such as Excelsior in Coventry and Orient in Waltham, Massachusetts, selling production models in this form before the century's end. Contemporary photographs suggest that motor-bicycle enthusiasts gathered at cycling clubs during the 'bicycle boom' of this period, but the first recorded meeting for the specific purpose of forming a motorcycle club was held in a London cafe, in November 1901. The resulting Motor Cycling Club (MCC) set about organising social runs, race

**Above: Brilliant early motorcycling image, from 1910. The group of Californian riders were setting off on a 160-mile ride. Machines include three Indians, a Wagner and a Curtiss.**

meetings and long-distance reliability trials for its members, and it remains active as the longest-established motorcycle club in the world.

February 1902 saw publication of the first issue of *Motor Cycling*, meriting a stand at that year's Automobile Show in London, and *The Motor Cycle* followed in 1903, doubling the scope for national coverage of topics relevant to enthusiasts. During this year, the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland created the Auto-Cycle Club (ACC) with a sporting remit to test the qualities of machines and their riders, although it also offered social and tour-planning facilities for members. 1903 also brought into existence the first American motorcycle club, Yonkers MC (it should be noted that the letters 'MC' have traditionally denoted any social type of motorcycle club in the USA).

Rapid growth in the popularity of motorcycling brought a threat of restrictive legislation, which prompted Yonkers MC to host an open forum for interested parties at its clubhouse in Brooklyn, New York. The result was the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM), founded on September 7, 1903 and defined in article one, section two of its constitution as follows:





**Above: The short-lived Hildebrand & Wolfmüller, made in Munich and the world's first production motorcycle.**

**Above left: Pioneering female rider Muriel Hind, with her Rex V-twin 'The Blue Devil' pauses in Newcastle during a 1908 London-Edinburgh ride.**

**Below: Riders mass for the start of a 1913 race, in America. Machines include an Excelsior (American X in the UK) sporting number 20.**

"Its objects shall be to encourage the use of motorcycles and to promote the general interests of motorcycling; to ascertain, defend and protect the rights of motorcyclists; to facilitate touring; to assist in the good roads movement; and to advise and assist in the regulation of motorcycle racing and other competition in which motorcycles engage."

Britain's ACC was a founding member in 1904 of the international governing body for motorcycle sport, the Fédération Internationale des Clubs Motocyclistes (FICM), which would later be renamed the FIM. The ACC was itself renamed the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU) in 1907, and went on to establish a series of trials and endurance events covering the whole of the British Isles. In similar sporting vein, the British Motorcycle Racing Club, also known as BMCRC or

Bemsee, was founded in 1909 at Brooklands circuit in Surrey. Competition was then, as now, a great driver of technological advancement and both organisations survive to this day, the latter being recognised as the oldest motorcycle racing club in the world.

The British Cycle and Motor Cycle Manufacturers and Traders Union, a forerunner of today's Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), was established in 1910 for the purposes of industry standardisation and trade protection. Female riders remained constrained by censorious attitudes in society, and only a few very determined women such as Agnes Muriel Hind, an early member of the MCC who was reputedly the first female in Britain to ride her own motorcycle, succeeded in competing on equal terms with men. *The Motor Cycle* championed the cause of women riders from the outset, and helped to persuade several manufacturers to produce open-framed ladies' models that could accommodate full-length skirts. ▶







**Above: Typical club event from the pre First World War period. This is the Exeter and District MCC, in August 1912.**

(M&ATA), which had been established three years earlier, effectively took its place. An early priority for the M&ATA was to maintain continuity in the annual 'Gypsy Tour' programme. This had been initiated over the weekend of June 16-17, 1917, when an estimated 22,000 riders plus half that number of sidecar passengers had embarked on a 'sociable ride' around New England, covering up to 100 miles each day. Following a pre-ordained scenic route, the format encompassed a social picnic plus various competitive motorcycle-related games, with souvenir medals awarded to participants.

The M&ATA greatly increased nationwide participation in these tours during the next four years and on May 15, 1924, its thriving Riders Division, now with some 10,000 members, was renamed the American Motorcycle Association (AMA), the slogan of which, as stated in the following week's issue of *Western Motorcyclist and Bicyclist*, was:

"An Organized Minority Can Always Defeat an Unorganized Majority."

Since participation in Gypsy tours now required AMA membership, they were a powerful recruiting tool for the new organisation, which was ratified on August 1, 1924. Concerned from the outset with public image, the AMA issued press statements intended to encourage safe and responsible behaviour by its members, but little did its policy-makers know how destructive for this image the actions of an unorganised minority would prove to be in just over two decades' time.

End

#### ■ Next month: A Golden Era (1925 to 1946)

**Right: American US Signal Corps soldiers, with Harley-Davidsons, at work transporting carrier pigeons to the front line in France during the latter stages of the First World War.**



► The young American rider Carl Stearns Clancy, in the course of becoming the first person to travel around the globe by motorised means on his four-cylinder Henderson motorcycle, observed in 1912 "many short, noisy, belt-driven English machines, but rarely without a side car attached," noting that students in Oxford got around "on bicycles by the hundreds and motorcycles by the score." Demand for new machines was such even relatively large manufacturers such as BSA could sell out their entire production runs, while regional clubs existed in sufficient numbers for *The Motor Cycle* to run a monthly series profiling the major ones.

Following the British declaration of war on Germany in August 1914, the ACU stepped forward to help the War Office with the provision and training of motorcyclists. Many potential recruits were interviewed by the editor of *The Motor Cycle*, for military duties ranging from dispatch rider to ammunition carrier, scout, medical supplies courier, mechanised infantryman or light ambulance driver.

Meanwhile, a passion for board-track motorcycle racing, originating in California, had gripped wider American society by 1915, when membership of the FAM exceeded 8000 individuals and many hundreds of clubs. The Van Buren sisters, Augusta and Adeline, gained national publicity for a solo coast-to-coast ride a year later, during which each was arrested several times for wearing male motorcycling attire. Although the sisters' main aim of being accepted as military dispatch riders was unsuccessful, their adventure did demonstrate the motorcycle's rapidly growing potential as universal transport, until the Conscription Act of June 1917 plus the redirection of manufacturing output to help the war effort bled the FAM of its core membership.

Further proof of ubiquity came when the first US soldier to enter Germany at the conclusion of the First World War did so on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Although the global conflict and subsequent Spanish 'flu pandemic proved particularly deadly to young adults, both depleting the prime motorcycling demographic, the motorcycle's proven versatility in the field helped the ACU to sign up an additional 18,000 members within six months of the November 1918 armistice, and UK new-machine registrations jumped from 114,722 in 1919 to almost half a million in 1924.

The FAM folded in 1919 and the industry-sponsored Motorcycle and Allied Trades Association



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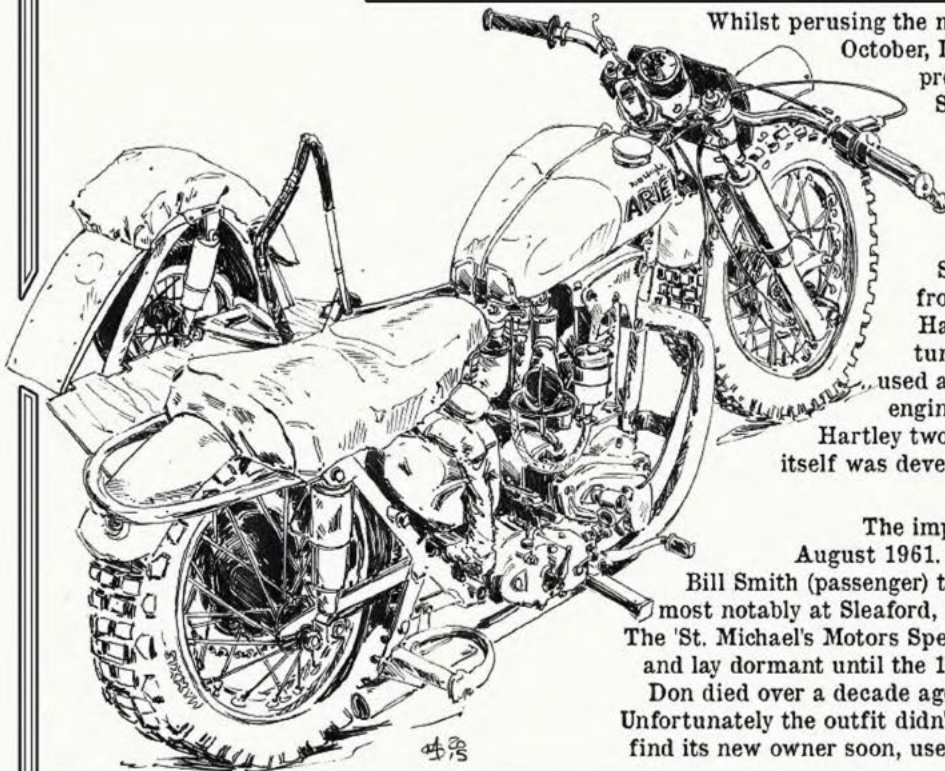
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## c.1959 Ariel 645cc Grass-Track Racing Outfit



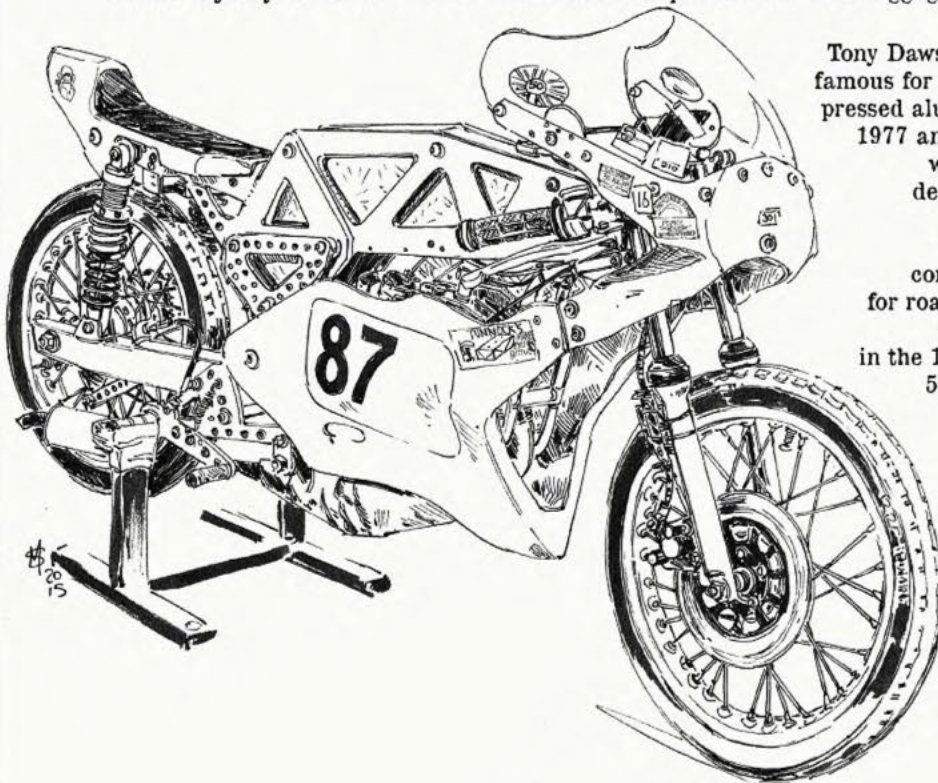
Whilst perusing the machines in the Bonhams auction at Stafford in October, I was rather taken with this Ariel outfit. It was previously raced and developed by Don Wright of St. Michael's Motors, Stamford. The Ariel's first incarnation appeared in 1957 but it soon became outclassed by the parallel twins that were racing at the same time. At the end of 1959 Don decided it was time to improve the outfit in order to make it more competitive. Sticking with the Ariel engine. Don took advice from well known Ariel tuner of the day Laurence Hartley. Using a 1934 Red Hunter barrel, Hartley tuned and bored the barrel up to 645cc. The head used a 1936 factory bronze item intended for a 499cc engine. The piston crown was machined to suit, and Hartley two inch Jessops inlet valves installed. The frame itself was developed by Don, using a 1950s Red Hunter frame.

The improved outfit made its first race appearance in August 1961. Ridden by Don's friends Ken Fisher (rider) and Bill Smith (passenger) the outfit soon began to win at multiple events, most notably at Sleaford, where the team achieved six wins in six starts. The 'St. Michael's Motors Special' was later retired after a successful career and lay dormant until the 1980s when Don entered it in the Vintage Class. Don died over a decade ago and so the machine has not been raced since. Unfortunately the outfit didn't sell at the auction. I for one hope that it does find its new owner soon, used as intended and not broken for the rare parts.

# Sketchbook

## Motorcycles, seen through the sket

As I passed the Classic 50cc Racing Club, this racer with an unusual frame construction caught my eye. Built by Alan Leeson in 2010, with permission from Tony Dawson, to see whether it would produce a lighter frame, the result was that the frame weighed about the same as a tubular example. This machine is currently raced in the Classic 50cc class. Alan plans to build another bike with this frame to take to Bonneville in 2016, and the idea makes a lot of sense as the majority of the bike can be dismantled and packed into hand luggage! I look forward to hearing how he gets on.



Tony Dawson raced sidecars in the 1960s and is most famous for inventing the Astralite wheel, a lightweight pressed aluminium wheel which started production in 1977 and by the end of the 1980s over 1500 wheels were being sold globally per year. As well as designing wheels, Tony Dawson also formed a company called SCITSU (Selfish Conduct Inhibits True Sporting Union) in 1978. The company was founded to produce components for road race bikes. This aluminium frame design was used on a number of road racing bikes in the 1970s, mostly using larger engines than this 50cc example. A bike with this frame design appeared on Tomorrow's World in the mid-1970s. Tony patented the design and some think that if he hadn't the Japanese may well have taken it on, as it is a design that could be easily automated due to it being a series of aluminium plates bolted together. The ride height can be adjusted by changing the vertical plates, and the tank is sandwiched between the top two plates. The construction is surprisingly strong, but still enables a certain amount of the twist and flex that is needed to maintain grip on a road racing machine.

SCITSU Replica

www.sketchbook

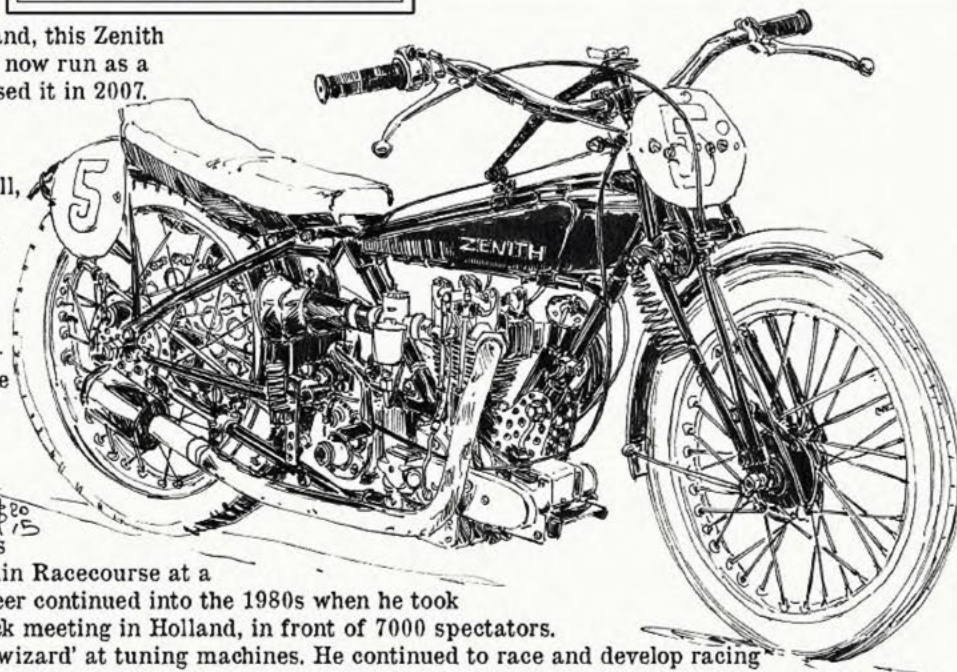


## 1928 Zenith Grass-Track

Found on the Vintage Motorcycle Club stand, this Zenith was once ridden by Adrian Kessell and is now run as a sprint machine by Ron Pates who purchased it in 2007.

Adrian Kessell (1926-2010) is a Cornish motorcycling legend, son of Tommy Kessell, who was a pre-war motorcycle champion. Adrian started racing in September 1945 when he rode his father's 1926 Zenith, coming third. Adrian is famed as being the most consistent 250cc champion of all time, winning over 20 Cornwall Grass-Track Championships, the Southern Centre Championship, as well as winning in Wessex, Midlands and Western Centres. Not only did he ride grass-track, he also rode in scrambles, trials, hillclimbing and sprinting. One event of note was when Adrian beat English speedway stars

Norman Parker and Bill Kitchen at Bodmin Racecourse at a grass-track meeting in 1949. Adrian's career continued into the 1980s when he took fifth place in the International Grass-Track meeting in Holland, in front of 7000 spectators. Adrian made his own frames and was a 'wizard' at tuning machines. He continued to race and develop racing machines until he fell ill in 2009. He was unable to attend a meeting at Wiscombe Park which was the first meeting there that he'd missed in many years. Adrian passed away peacefully at home on February 8, 2010. His funeral was attended by many people from the motorcycle community, to mark the passing of a local motorcycling legend.



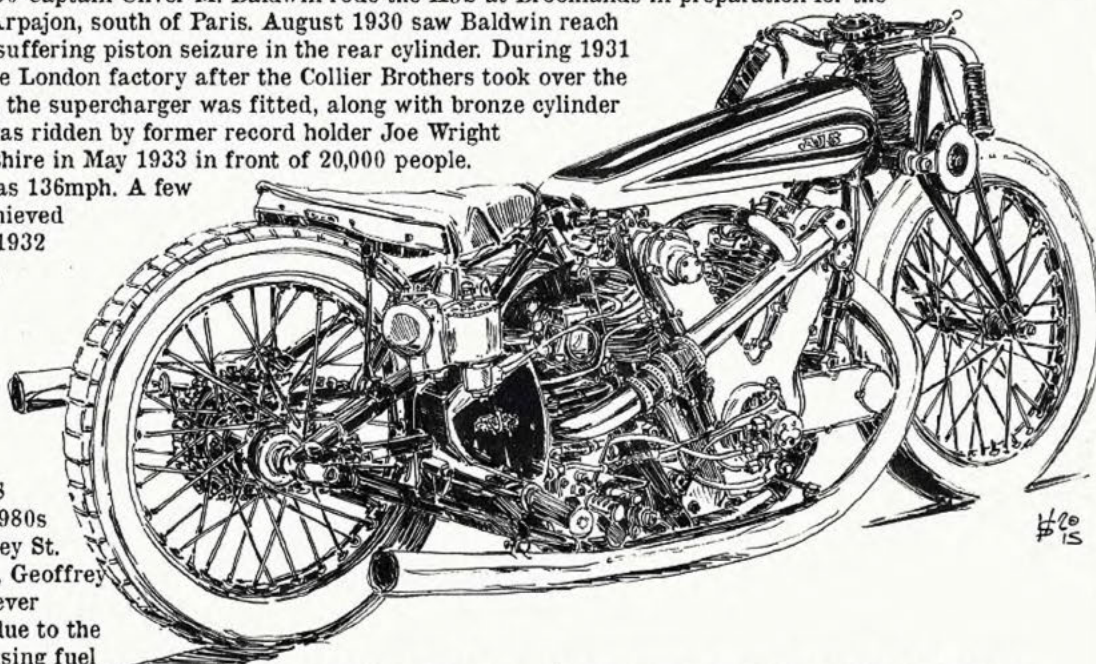
# Travels

## Sketchbooks of Martin Squires



On visiting the National Motorcycle Museum for its open day I had one machine that I wanted to get in the sketchbook, and that was this 1929 AJS. It was built at the Wolverhampton factory with the aim of breaking the world motorcycle speed record. The target speed for the machine was 150mph, an ambitious 15mph faster than the existing record of 134.75mph held by Germany's Ernst Henne on a supercharged 743 c.c. BMW. The machine used an engine based on a pair of R10 overhead camshaft barrels in a 50 degree V-twin configuration, mounted in a large duplex frame with a 60 inch wheelbase. George Rowley, a works rider for AJS, test rode the V-twin on the Wolverhampton to Bridgenorth road on its first shake down run. It must have been a real handful on that public road especially seeing that it produced 70bhp. In July 1930 Captain Oliver M. Baldwin rode the AJS at Brooklands in preparation for the official record attempt in Arpajon, south of Paris. August 1930 saw Baldwin reach 130mph at Arpajon before suffering piston seizure in the rear cylinder. During 1931 the V-twin was moved to the London factory after the Collier Brothers took over the AJS mark. It was here that the supercharger was fitted, along with bronze cylinder heads. The blown version was ridden by former record holder Joe Wright at Southport Sands, Lancashire in May 1933 in front of 20,000 people.

The top speed of the day was 136mph. A few months later Joe Wright achieved 145mph in Hungary but in 1932 BMW had already achieved 151.77mph. After these attempts the machine was retired and passed into private ownership in Tasmania in 1939, where Reg Monroe achieved 119.9mph, breaking the Australian record. The AJS returned to the UK in the 1980s and was restored by Geoffrey St. John. After the restoration, Geoffrey thought that the machine never achieved its true potential due to the venting in the fuel tank causing fuel starvation. As great as it is to be able to see machines like this on display at the museum, part of me still wishes to see historic machines like this being run. Maybe not to achieve its intended goal of 150mph, which would be incredible, but to see and hear a machine of such calibre would be such a joy and education for all who could potentially witness it.



## 1929 AJS Record Attempt Machine





# You were asking

Your queries resolved with Richard Rosenthal

## Lucas dynamo direction arrows

Why did Lucas make right- and left-hand dynamos when all you need to do to change to rotation is to swap the wires? Another thing I found interesting was to discover that the main tubular steel body was made by bending and welding flat plate. There is a 'V' on the inside, and if you look carefully you can see a line of weld on the outside.

**Neville Heath, email, East Anglia.**

Two interesting points Neville, and I too have wondered why dynamos were handed when, like you, it seems obvious to me just to swap wires.

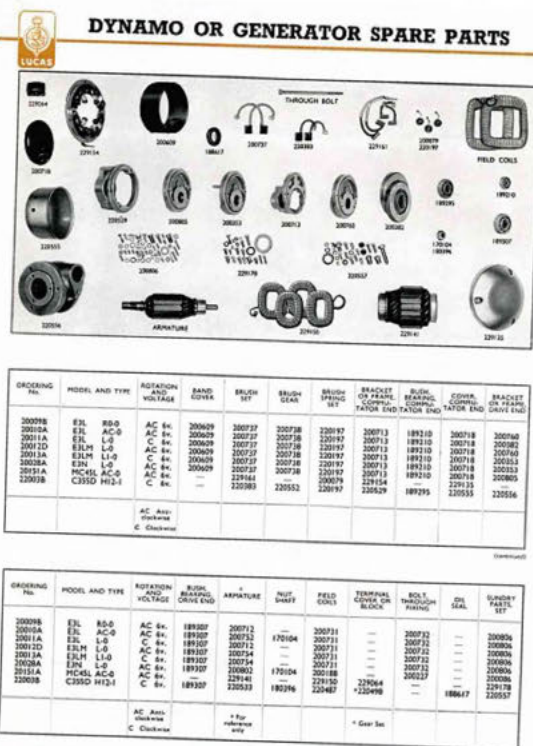
*Having polled a number of friends two lines of thought have emerged, one of which is cynical!*

*The first thought suggests the making/ marking of dynamos dates back to the early 1920s when the dynamo was in unit with the early single-body magdynos. Not really sure why this should be the case but three friends believe it so, and the second is simply the view that dealers had to keep stocks of both left and right direction dynamos, which therefore increased Lucas factory sales. In the short term, this may be true, but as the*

*dealers wouldn't sell any more units, this has only limited advantage while new dealers stock up for the first time.*

*Any better suggestions will be appreciated by this column and Neville.*

*Your second observation concurs with that employed in steam practice, an observation surprising to me but probably obvious to the rest of the world. A friend has built a number of model steam engines in three-inch and four-inch scale. To make the boiler body, a flat piece of plate steel (half inch thick) is rolled into a cylinder and the joint is welded.*







## Asbestos brake linings

Do motorcycle brake linings contain asbestos? And if so, is there a danger in removing these from the brake shoes from my 1946 BSA B31? I believe the linings currently fitted are originals. Who can I contact if I feel I've been exposed to asbestos risks from all brake linings I removed from shoes while working in the car and motorcycle trade?

**William Dunne, email, Wales.**

*The likelihood is that your BSA's brake lining material does contain an element of asbestos and yes there is a health risk in removing and disposing of it just as there is a risk when dealing with the dust it creates in use. While this column does not wish to minimise the risks involved in dealing with brake linings possibly/probably containing asbestos, it is worth mentioning that if, for example, we*

*enter homes, industrial buildings, shops etc that were built or refurbished before the year 2000, we are entering premises that will have elements of asbestos in many materials used therein, ranging from decorative coverings such as Artex to wall plaster, soil pipes, loo seats, electrical parts, pipe laggings, insulation materials and more. Of these, any materials containing 'blue asbestos' (such as boiler lagging, for example) are the most dangerous, while so called 'white asbestos' such as roofing sheets is considered less hazardous. As already stated, none of the above is intended to trivialise the risks involved with all types of asbestos, rather to put the situation into perspective and we at TCM can only advise you seek specialist advice in all cases.*

*The risks of handling asbestos-containing*

*materials means that the Government has issued many guidelines and much legislation covering the subject. However, one rule seems paramount in that if asbestos or materials containing asbestos are worked with the operative/s is/are at risk, but if the material is left untouched it is often – though with exceptions, especially involving blue asbestos – considered 'safer' or relatively safe. Thus the asbestos roof to a garden shed for example is likely (not guaranteed) safe while in situ untouched, but if a panel blows off in a gale and fractures, then dust is released and handling risks are real and necessitate following appropriate guidelines or seeking specialist help.*

*From this you'll gather William there are risks in handling the removal of our motorcycle's old brake linings. If you are carrying*



**Non-asbestos linings, such as these Ferodo 3850 items on Rocket Gold Star shoes, are readily available now.**

*out this work yourself you should follow appropriate guidelines, however, we take a different approach and send all brake shoes for relining to one of the specialists detailed in the motorcycle press adverts, as they are aware of the hazards and deal with the task appropriately and dispose of the linings in a correct manner.*

*Many of us over a certain age will have worked with asbestos long before its dangers were understood. I, for example,*

*have cut asbestos panels with a handsaw while helping my grandad build his garage and played as a child on farm tracks covered in packed broken asbestos. We all wonder if we are harbouring a potential health problem, just as I know you are from your emails William, and if so we can obtain excellent advice from a body such as:*

*The British Lung Foundation  
03000 030 555  
helpline@blf.org.uk*

## NOVA complications

I've been advised by my club's dating officers I need to complete NOVA documentation in order to register a German-built 1953 Zundapp motorcycle I've been restoring. What is NOVA documentation? Why do I need to do this? And to whom do I address my enquiries? Am I best to complete this complex procedure, or can I just apply to DVLA for an age-related registration mark and keep my head down?

**Mr H Mortimer, email, South Coast.**

*The term NOVA is an acronym for Notification Of Vehicle Arrivals. It is now a requirement of any vehicle imported into the UK permanently that HM Revenue and Customs is informed and any due VAT in respect of the imported means of transport is paid. You will need to produce evidence*

*you have completed this requirement to DVLA at the time of registering your vehicle for the first time. There are no exceptions for imported vehicles, so keeping your head down won't work. However, in some cases no VAT will be due and Revenue and Customs will issue a letter to this effect. If VAT is due (often 5% for older vehicles) the letter is issued once the VAT liability has been settled in full.*

*As cases differ. It will be best to contact HM Revenue and Customs direct and further advice can be found at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) or just key in 'NOVA Notification' into your internet search engine.*

*HM Revenue and Customs, Personal Transport Unit, Building 22, Priory Court, St John's Road, Dover, CT17 9SH. 01304 664171*

## Thinner shims

A local engineering firm made me a couple of 40 thou shims in bronze to take up end float in the Sturmey Archer gearbox fitted to my Norton. While it has improved the change, I feel it has taken up too much end float. I need to machine an estimated 10 thou from the shim. The engineering firm knows I've a lathe and said it is an easy job. But I don't know how to hold such a thin shim in the lathe chuck. I do have a range of chucks and a face plate.

**Andrew Feast-Hayes, email.**

*Using the face plate, clean its mounting surface thoroughly with degreaser and finish with methylated spirits. Stick shim centrally to face plate using double-sided tape and machine with tipped tool taking .001 to .002 inch cuts. Thanks to engineering friend Tom Gilbey for this approach – it's one I've now used successfully on at least five occasions including twice to reduce thickness of BM steel flat washers.*



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# YWA The bigger question

## More on the Wex carburettor

With reference to your feature Unusual Carburettors entitled Butterflies and Drums (TCM, November 2016, p 96-100) I hope you'll be interested in this information I've assembled for the Wex carburettor. By chance, I'm currently working on an incomplete Wex instrument, which has been languishing in my workshop for many years. When finished, the Wex will be tried on a Scott.

One of the parts I've made for the Wex is its jet. Attached is a dimensioned sketch of the jet as required for my model carburettor.

**John White,  
West Sussex.**

Thank you, John, for this detailed collection of Wex literature and the dimensioned sketch of the Wex submerged jet. There is a very incomplete Wex instrument in the late Hoppy Hopkins' collection, but as so many parts were missing, the drawing of a complete carburettor was included instead.

Prompted by your interest in the Wex instrument, here's some background leading to and after its development.

Born in Exeter, Harry Weslake (1897-1978) was the son of John Weslake, director/engineer of local gas engineers Willey and Co. As a schoolboy, Harry sketched his design for a flexibly mounted motorised cycle attachment. His father belittled the idea, then two years later the Wall Autowheel was launched. John was man enough to admit his error over his son's device and from then on helped rather than discouraged Harry with his designs and inventions.

Aged 15, Harry started riding motorcycles, against his mother's wishes, and on leaving school took an apprenticeship at his father's firm. At the outbreak of war there was a tug of war between Harry's wish to join the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the needs of Willey and Co, which was engaged on essential work. The youngster signed up with the RFC but reports suggest military discipline wasn't always to his taste. During this time he worked with his father's approval who helped on improving carburettor design with gains in performance and economy. Lodged in 1918, this was the first of many patents taken out by Weslake.

Following the end of the First World War, Harry's mother died, then his father. With no family obligations to Willey and Co, Harry left to establish his first business in a small Exeter workshop with a staff of three including Stan Glanfield, who later became renowned in Rudge circles during and after his trip round the world on a Rudge outfit. Among other work and development the business began making carburettors which they named The Wex ('W'eslake and 'EX'eter).

While the Wex carburettor didn't become a fitment of choice for main-stream motorcycle factories, it did gain popularity among some Brooklands racers as an ideal track-racing carburettor using either dope or petrol. Their most notable exponent was Gordon Cobbold, who enjoyed much track success including record breaking with Wex instruments fitted



Harry Weslake, in the saddle, with Mike Daniels and the Rickman brothers, Don and Derek.



Above left: Gordon Cobbold enjoyed success with a Wex carburettor.



Above right: Perhaps Weslake's greatest moment was down to this man, Peter Collins. Here, he's grasstracking a Weslake-engined Comet in 1976.

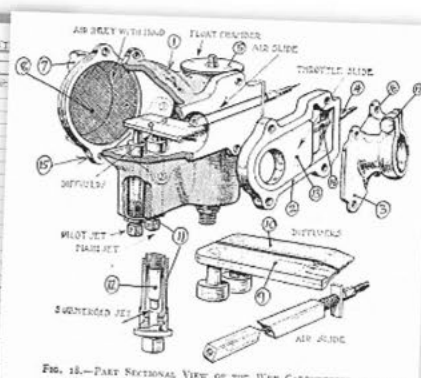
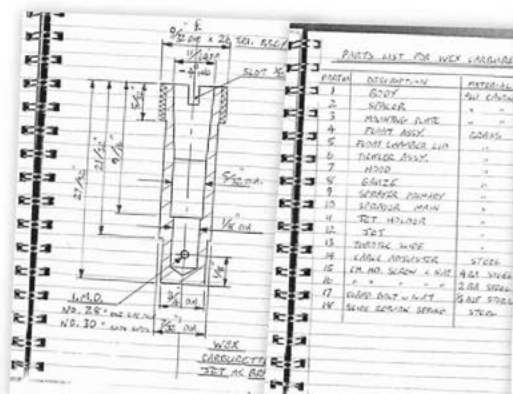
to various machines. Weslake established the business Wex Carburettors Ltd, which in its adverts always placed "Wex" in speech marks. This business moved to London, using various addresses including 2 Pond Place, London, SW3 - often

included in its adverts. Some observers, in both period and now, state the Wex carburettor never worked well except on the track and poor sales led to its demise in the mid 1920s. While Wex was trading in difficult financial times, sales were strong enough

for the business to remain viable until a major recipient of instruments defaulted on payment forcing Wex Carburettors Ltd to fold in 1926.

While spending time at Brooklands, Harry was in discussion with many riders, engineers and motorcycle makers regarding the difference in performance of seemingly similar and even identical engines. Using experience gained while working for gas engineers Willey and Co, Harry realised the differences were down to gas flow of cylinder heads. By turning his earlier gas meter knowledge on its head, Harry devised equipment to measure engine gas flow leading to the gas flow meter. And engine gas flow was to govern much of Weslake's career, notably in the car, motorcycle and marine worlds. And while he developed many successful designs, arguably his greatest moment came as Peter Collins won the 1976 Speedway World Final riding a Weslake.

**Some pages from John White's notebook, with some Wex explanation.**





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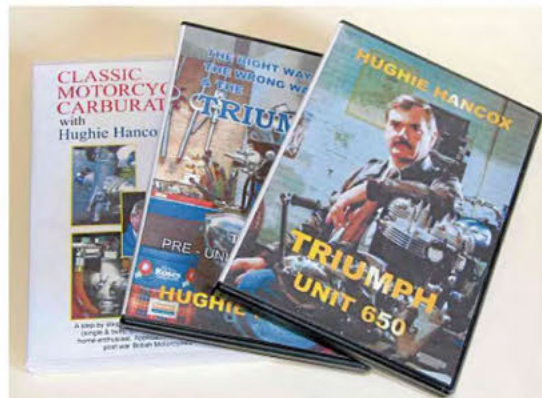
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**[www.hughiehancoxrestorations.co.uk](http://www.hughiehancoxrestorations.co.uk)**



Produced to help you restore & maintain your Triumph, Hughie's DVDs show the workshop techniques that he learned over 20 years working at the Meriden factory.

Also available from the website are Hughie's books - "Tales of Triumph Motorcycles & the Meriden Factory" and "Triumph Production Testers Tales" as well as a range of Triumph



## BSA three wheelers

### THE SPECIALIST

The BSA Front Wheel Drive Club provides just about everything an enthusiastic owner might need to help enjoy his, or her, car to the full.

Naturally, this includes spares, where the club not only holds stock, but also rescued most of the 3000-odd relevant BSA factory drawings, enabling replacement parts to be made accurately. The club's spares specialist shared his considerable knowledge with us for this restoration guide.

Club membership details can be found at the website: [www.bsafwdc.co.uk](http://www.bsafwdc.co.uk)

### MODEL HISTORY

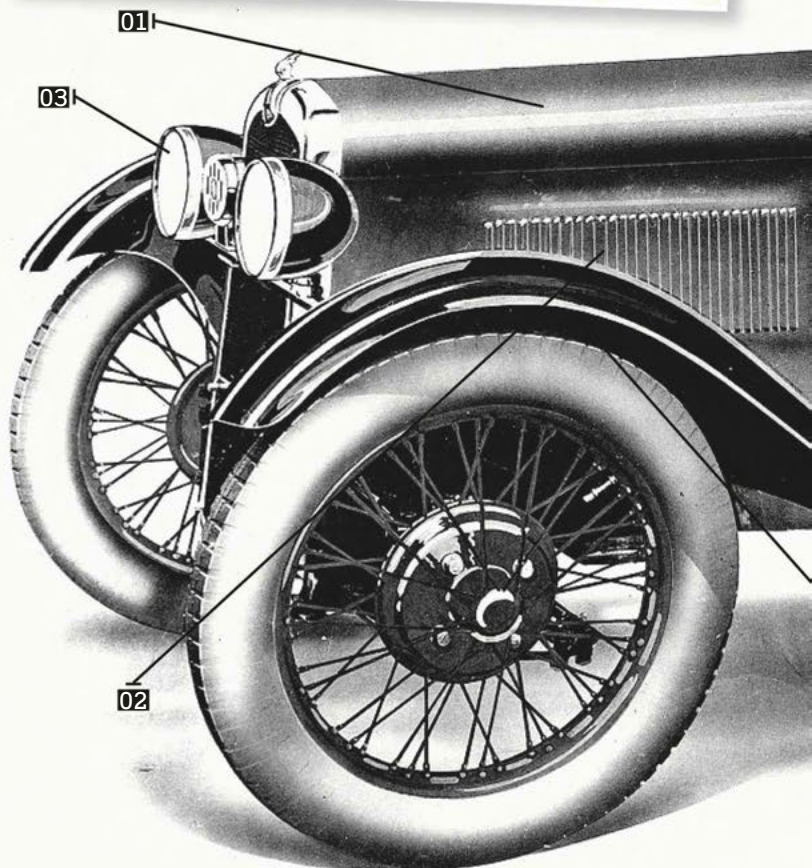
With Daimler and Lanchester as wholly-owned brands, BSA had a long history of car manufacture. A new generation of light cars appeared in 1921, powered by ohv V-twin engines. The first three wheeled version appeared in 1929, a head-on challenge to the well-established and successful Morgan concern.

The Birmingham manufacturer had come up with a well-engineered product with the novelty of front wheel drive (FWD), an unusual feature at the time but avoiding the disadvantages of Morgan's motorcycle-style transmission. BSA also offered refinements such as weather protection, reverse gear and an electric starter.

Soon, there was a range of body styles and standards of finish, giving the salesmen plenty to persuade a wavering motorcyclist of the advantages of three-wheel motoring, such as economy and cheap tax.

The cars sold well, in spite of the Great Depression. For 1932, further models were powered by four-cylinder, side-valve engines. Rationalising in the face of opposition from such as the Austin 7, BSA discontinued three-wheeler production in 1936, although the FWD four-wheelers continued, having acquired the Scout model name.

The cars evolved with increased horsepower, until the Second World War ended production. In the late 1950s, BSA toyed once more with three-wheelers, the Ladybird microcar, yet history repeated itself. This time, BMC's Mini saw off the new venture.



#### 01

##### Engine

The transversely fitted, V-twin overhead-valve, air-cooled engine of the earlier cars is generally considered to be based on a Hotchkiss unit.

The 85mm cylinders fire through a 90mm stroke for a 1022cc swept volume. A wet-sump unit, the bottom half uses roller and ball bearings in conventional style. Thus, restoration is mainly straightforward and, whatever may be required, the club is by far the biggest source of NOS parts.

The later four-cylinder engine is a 1074cc side-valve, water-cooled by thermo-syphon with 60x95 bore and stroke. One ball and one roller bearing support the crankshaft, the big-ends are white-metal.

The engine was fitted longitudinally and the cars were offered in both front wheel- and rear wheel-drive layouts for four-wheelers. Three-wheelers and FWD four-wheelers had their transmissions in front of the vehicle's engines.

The water-cooled engines run hot, so the cooling

system needs clear waterways and a good radiator. Some owners have successfully fitted electric pumps. Low oil pressure is also a potential problem. A worn oil pump can deliver pressure, but poor flow. Low pressure can also be caused by worn (although replaceable) plain camshaft bearings. The telescopic oil feed to the crankshaft nose can wear. Worn big-ends need specialist attention while the motorcycle-type sludge trap in the crank might well repay inspection. Club members

can also buy a kit that provides a spin-on oil filter. The engines need traditional oils rather than modern lubricants.

#### 02

##### Transmission

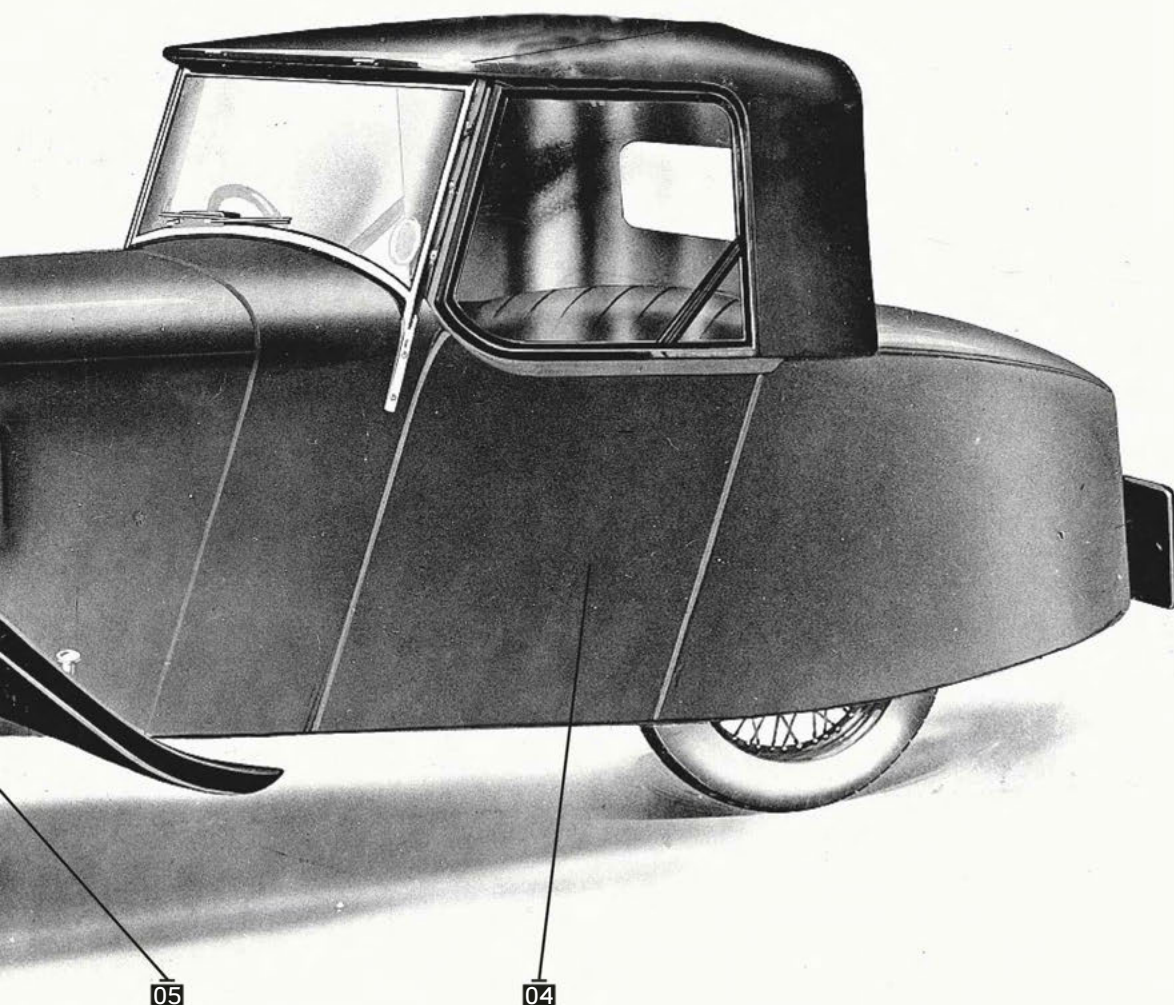
The bell-housing contains a wet clutch with two cork-inserted plates and three plain plates. The clutch is very reliable if the oil level has been maintained.

Attention is generally limited to replacing the corks. The crash gearbox offers three speed and reverse. They are also sturdy units, but worn

early boxes could jump out of second gear. Apart from metric bearings (standard items), gearbox repairs are a question of finding better second-hand parts.

The differential has a steel worm driving a five-inch bronze wheel, another difficult part that the club has re-manufactured. Final drive is via short cardan shafts with fabric inner joints and Hookes joints in each of the front hubs. The movement limited by the Hookes joints results in the cars having a 40ft turning circle.





03

#### Electrics

The six-volt electrics for all models were provided by Lucas. The starter motor and three-brush dynamo are model-specific and almost pure unobtainium. However, all the internals can be overhauled by a sparks specialist. Upgrades include 12-volt systems with a Morris Minor dynamo and modern regulator. Headlamp units were seven-, later eight-inch standard Lucas items.

The rear light is 'porkie' style, doubled up on later models.

04

#### Chassis etc.

The chassis is formed from channel section, with a central tube.

Strong, but basic, accident-damaged chassis have been successfully repaired.

Frame members supported the bodywork, consisting of an ash frame with a plywood floor. On earlier cars, the ash frame was clad with plywood and faced with leathercloth fabric. Later cars used aluminium body panels. Repairing the wooden elements

involves matching the remaining parts, as individual assembly was a greater or lesser element of every BSA car.

Braking was provided by one drum brake operating on the rear wheel, the front brake was a single drum mounted at the side of the differential. Even by early post-vintage standards, they are better than adequate. With 30 greasing points needing occasional attention, a BSA owner is often fully engaged with his, or her, vehicle.

05

#### Suspension

The rear wheel was suspended on a swinging arm arrangement, with a quarter-elliptic spring inside the tubular chassis backbone. Each front wheel was independently suspended, located with four quarter-elliptic springs and damped by Andre Hartford type units - friction discs moved by lever action. These are reliable but specialist help is available with rebuilding if necessary. The club can help with replacements for broken spring leaves.

## PRICING

BSA cars may not be common and the club is aware of around 230 survivors. More surface occasionally, sometimes club members are aware of vehicles salted away years ago. At £5-7000, a barn find could be a daunting prospect, although something in running order may fetch £8-10,000. Respectable vehicles can command £12-15,000.

## SUMMARY

During the seven years of production, it appears more than 6500 BSA three-wheelers were sold. Many survived the war, only to be adopted as cheap transport and driven into the ground.

Ideally, a restoration project really needs to be as complete as possible. The wooden elements can be a cause for concern. There's nothing that can't be fixed, but it may depend on the skills level of the restorer.

With all the restoration hurdles cleared, a BSA can offer an entry into vintage (first-year models), or post-vintage motoring at a comparatively reasonable price. The vehicles are equally welcome in motorcycle circles.

Byways, not motorways, are more BSA-suited, although when making progress, the three-speed gearbox can be limiting. The bodywork styling may be restrained - touring, rather than sporting - but the tricycle wheel arrangement and low weight distribution makes it a well-mannered car, although tight corners can be interesting.

Out and about, owners soon get used to regularly explaining that the car is neither a Morgan, nor a copy of one, but stands (three-square) on its own merits and initial purchase is considerably cheaper.

As the company once said: 'Get away with BSA.'

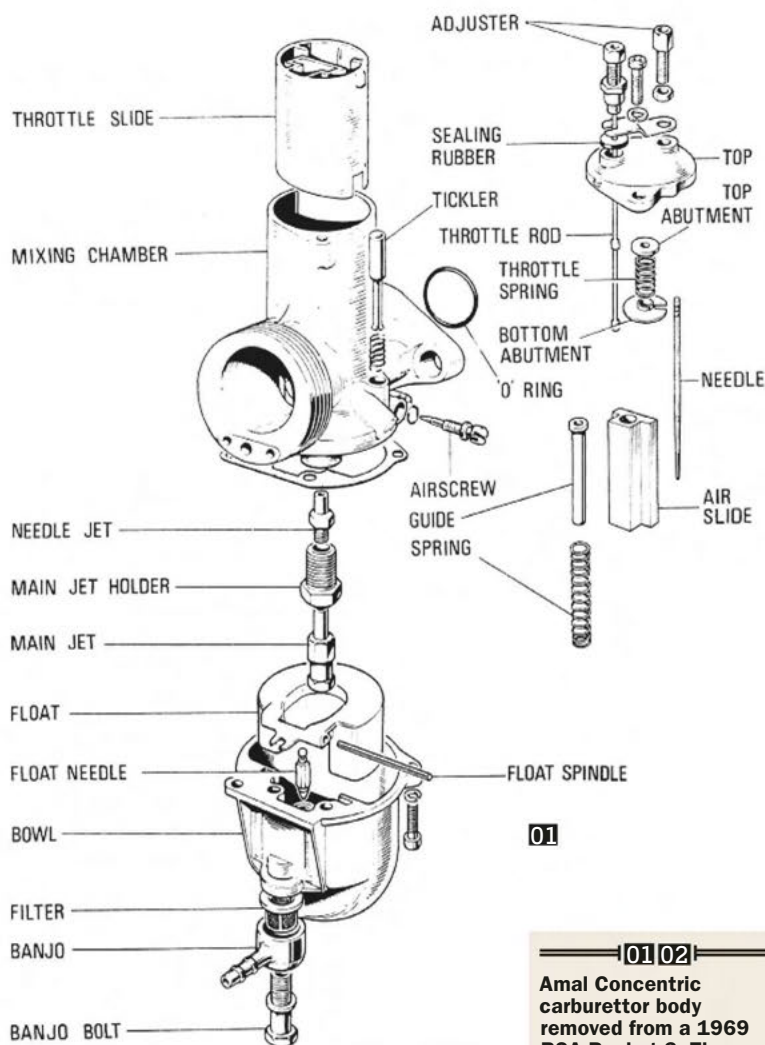
End



# Multi carburettor synchronisation

Any multi cylinder motorcycle with two or more carburettors out of balance is less than a joy to ride. While badly set up carburettors irritate the rider, extreme cases can result in engine damage

Words and photography: RICHARD ROSENTHAL



01

01 02

Amal Concentric carburettor body removed from a 1969 BSA Rocket 3. The marks 626/15 confirm this instrument is an appropriate original fitment for the 1969 and 1970 model Rocket 3s. The extra L indicates it is a left fitment instrument (with airscrew to left) and its mates are 626/14 and 626/16. While current new instruments will be marked 626 alone for example, they can be set up in relation to jetting, slide cutaway etc to mirror the original carburettor.



Two years ago, a Norton Dominator Sports pitched up at our workshop with its owner stating: "Its engine's all over the place." It was a bizarre phrase, but a quick ride round the block confirmed this summary.

As the engine was loaded under power it improved, but a glance at its exhausts revealed the more it was opened up, the darker the smoke from the right side was, while the left was clean. Compression, ignition and, at first glance, the carburettors, were all given the thumbs up. The valve and ignition timing was dropped from the equation, as the left side was fine.

However, the progressively black exhaust smoke as the machine was opened up under load and its sooty right side plug confirmed a problem, as the left side plug was spot on after a run and there was no smoke on that side either.

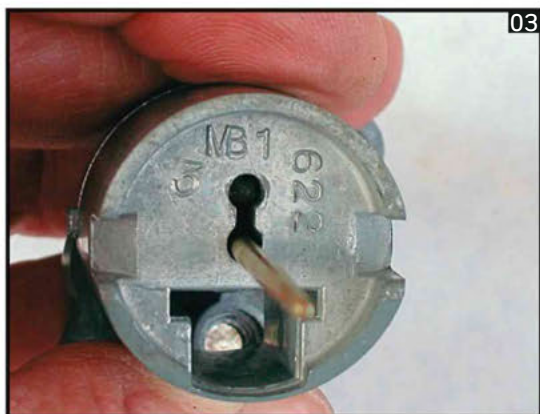
Fitted with a matched pair of appropriate handed Amal Monobloc instruments (376/288 and 376/289 for 1963/4) the solution was to strip and match components. An earlier check confirmed that both were fitted with correct 250 main jet, 3½ throttle valve (slide), 106 needle jet and new, seemingly identical needles, both in position three.

Thoughts of what happens in our workshop flooded into mind – more of that later. By measurement both slides were sound and with identical cutaways, both needles were not only near new, but measured identically, and likewise was the needle valve. But despite being marked up by Amal as '250', the hole in the jet from the right hand carburettor looked larger...

Rather than immediately measure it, both carburettors were reassembled and set up with identical airscrew settings and balanced slides on opening, but the main jets were transposed. And, yes, you've guessed it, the problem shifted to the left side. The owner was happy, well sort of, as his newly-purchased Dommie wasn't terminally ill, rather a little out of sorts.

In went another 250 main jet and all that remained was to synchronise the carburettors and fettle the airscrew settings. A check with our fine thou dimensioned drills (we've no tools to measure such small holes) indicated a match with a 330 main jet size. So what had happened? It is highly unlikely Amal had miss-sized or miss-stamped the





03

**03**  
The subject Amal 626 carburettor is fitted with a 622 slide, which bears the additional mark 3, indicating a number 3 cutaway. This refers to the cutaway to the base of the slide – for example, a number 4 cutaway will be noticeably larger. Because of riding style, I prefer a slightly larger cutaway, eg 3½, found as original with the later Trident also featured in this photo series. But, as the Amal book states 3, it'll be left alone and the files will stop in the drawer!



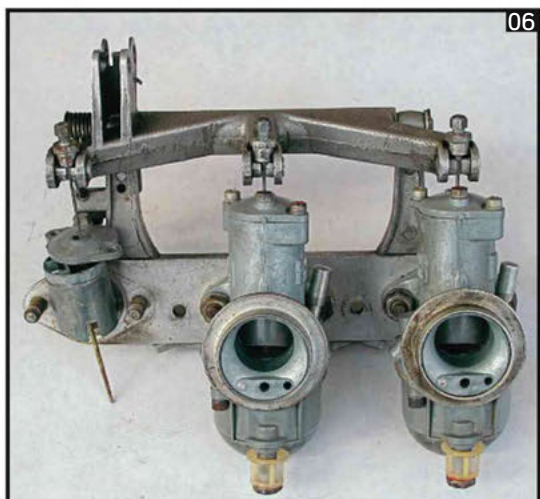
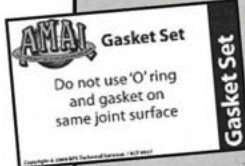
04

**04**  
Difficult to see clearly in this photograph, but marks indicate this carburettor is correctly fitted with a 150 main jet and a 106 needle jet. Checks confirmed no irritating soul tampered with them and all the needles from all three carburettors, visually and by measurement, checked as identical. But I hadn't a new needle to use as a comparison. As all three matched they're likely to be fine, but this is no guarantee...



05

**05**  
New Amal-manufactured Concentric series appropriate gasket set, comprising gaskets for manifold and float chamber, O-rings (including for airscrew and manifold) plus a selection of appropriate fibre washers. Following an argument recently with a friend, it gives me great pleasure to include accompanying Amal advice concerning the use of either manifold O-ring or gasket – but not both.



06

**06**  
Centre and right hand Concentric 626 carburettors, mounted to the BSA Rocket 3's manifold. The carburettor's slide is coupled to the linkage by an appropriate wire and screw with lock nut to the linkage. For demonstration, the left hand slide, body top and sundries ready to accept the rebuilt body are seen at the halfway stage. O-rings are employed to seal body to manifold. The unwanted manifold gaskets join many others in the sundry gasket box – they'll come in handy one day...

jet, but thoughts returned to what can happen in the Rosenthal workshop...

Needing in a hurry a 190 main jet for a c1964 BSA B40 fitted with an Amal 376/280, which had returned from America and was running too lean, a small amount of enterprise was required, as the best we could do from the in-house stock was either a 210 or a 160 main jet. Too rich, or too lean.

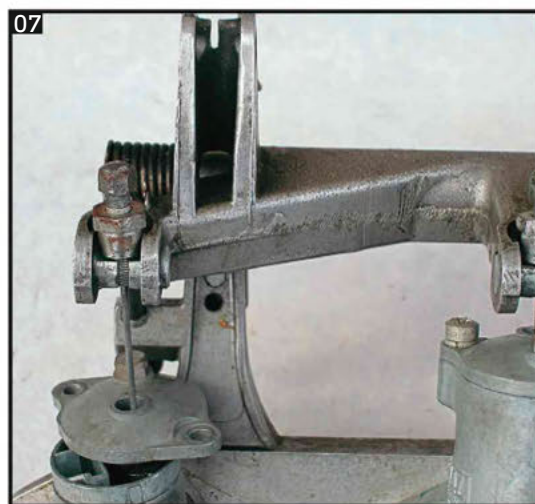
Out came the small Hobbymat lathe and, armed with a 0.046in (46 thou) drill, the 160 was opened out to approximately 190 (actually circa 186). Something similar had probably happened to the Norton's errant main jet in the past. In our/my defence, we always try to remember to file off the size from the jets we've modified and to scribe on what they now correspond to.

On start-up the B40 ran fine. The carburettor was set up and the machine was returned to its owner with a mention that we'd like it back in a few weeks to fit a new main jet and again re-set its Amal. A new appropriate Amal-manufactured 190 main jet was bought from our friends Surrey Cycles' sales trailer at the next Kempton Park autojumble, fitted and the 'modified' jet was consigned to our odd jets jam jar, a quarter filled with modified and home-made jets. You never know, one may come in handy one day.

So what's the point of all this preamble? If problems occur and all seemingly checks out, don't actually believe what you are seeing...

#### Note:

The jet sizes referred to here and applied to the mentioned Amal jets conform to BESA standards



07

**07**  
Close up of throttle valve wire mounting to carburettor linkage with adjuster and locknut. By design, this allows the use of a single throttle cable to the twist grip, without the need for twin cables as found with some twin cylinder machines, or junction boxes. However, some convert their Tridents/Rocket 3s to employ a single throttle cable to a three-way junction box – this is perhaps appropriate for racing, but for road use this standard set-up works well.



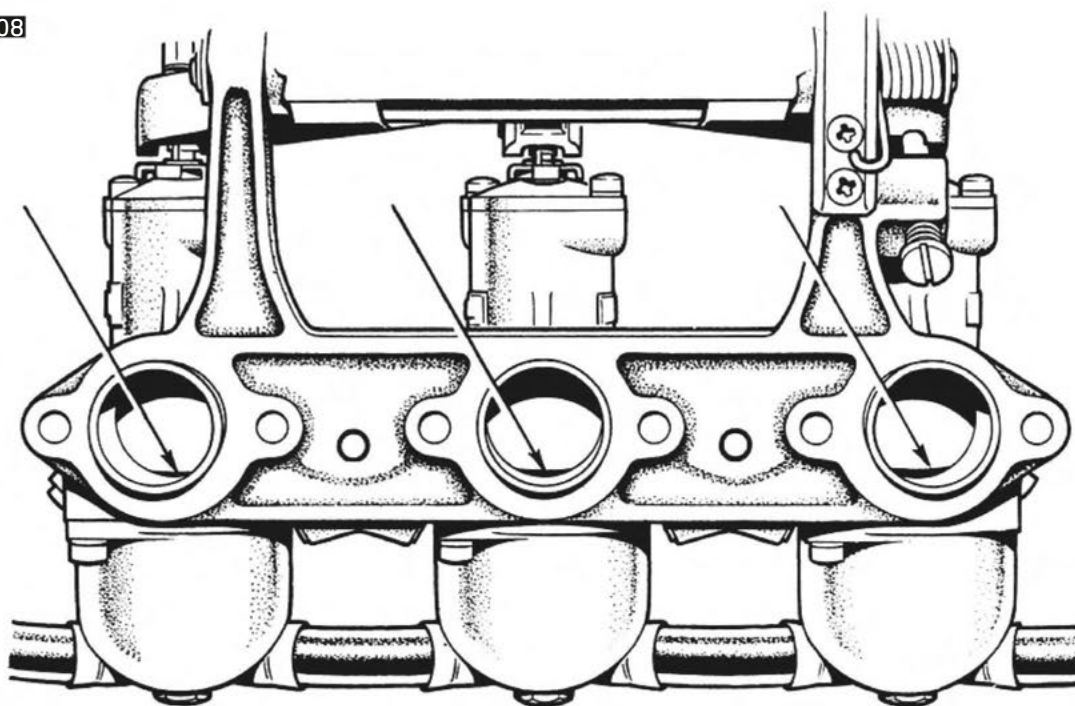
08/09

Factory manuals and aftermarket handbooks detail synchronising slides by adjustment by comparing slide heights. Quote: 'Arrange carburettor and inlet manifold assembly, less air filter, on bench. View the throttle slides through the engine side of the carburettors and adjust the throttle stop screw until one slide is open by approximately 0.010in. Compare other two slides, and adjust slide heights by screwing individual adjusters clockwise to lower slide and anticlockwise to raise. On completion of adjustment, tighten locknut to each adjuster.' It just doesn't work for me, so the carburettors are faced the wrong way round and it is onto the next photograph!

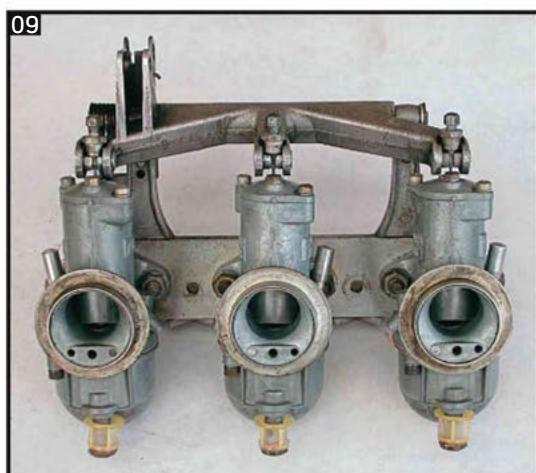
10

Either employ one or three dowels,  $\frac{3}{16}$ in or 5mm ideal. If using three, place one under each slide from air cleaner side, hence sight of cutaway. Adjust all three slides until they just grip dowel. Alternatively, use one rod and adjust until dowel just slides through under cutaway. Again, once synchronised, lock adjusters with locknut. If you are concerned about using cutaway of slide,  $\frac{1}{8}$ in (3mm) dowel under engine side of slide works too.

08



09



10



and the figure stamped on the jet informs that as new its hole size is measured in terms (CCs) of flow. But be warned that jets from older instruments – such as 1928 and earlier AMAC, Brown & Barlow and Binks, for example – will bear marks that only conform to the scheme devised by the maker.

Happily, tables have been devised that enable us to understand applied marks and, if we need to make appropriate jets as they detail in thous, the necessary drill required for desired jet size.

Taking the BESA standard Amal main jet 80. Its 'in flow' rate is identical to an AMAC number 30 jet. In Imperial dimensions both have a hole diameter of 0.030in (30 thou). And, as a further example, the Binks equivalent is a number 8 jet.

This is all fine and dandy, but be warned – while Amal jets helpfully conform to BESA standards, 1929-only Amal and Binks jets aren't interchangeable with other years.

### Synchronisation

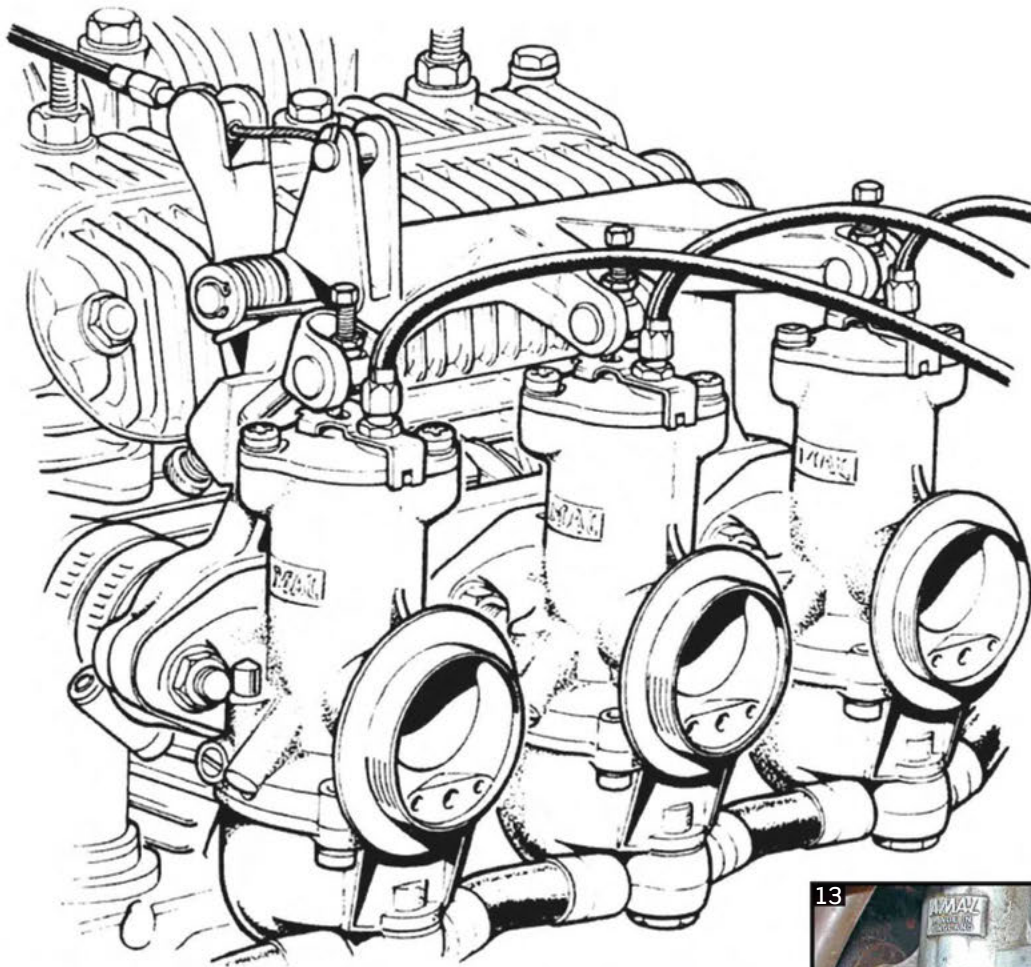
Presented with a multi carburettor motorcycle that is running poorly, how do we proceed? And it must be stated here that this is our approach – it is not gospel, and other approaches may or will work equally as well.

Carburettors are fully stripped and first stage cleaned with solvent. The components of each are placed in dedicated plastic lunchboxes, to ensure it is rebuilt with its same parts.

The boxes of parts are passed to our local cleaning specialist who, using industrial sonicating equipment with appropriate solutions rather than just water, cleans the components of each instrument, one box at a time, to ensure no mixing of parts.

On return, the jet sizes, throttle slides, needles and needle jets are checked by identification marks if they are present. If all is appropriate and matching Amal specification sheets (often printed in the machine's

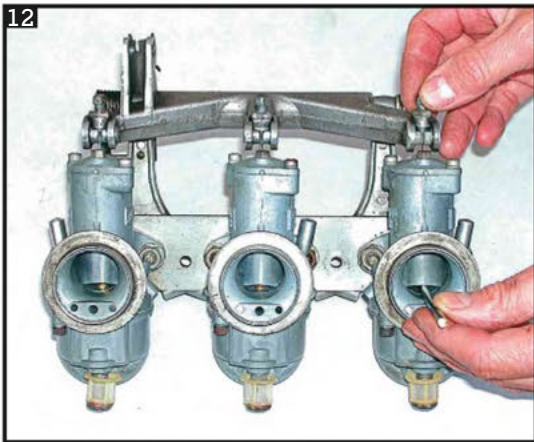




11 12

At this stage the slides were checked to ensure they lifted in unison by screwing in the throttle stop sited to left of linkage. Once happy, return the set to the machine and complete connecting to throttle, as well as linking and connecting the fuel supply as illustrated in sketch.

11



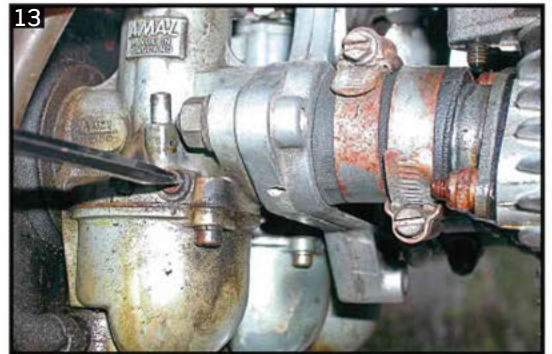
12

owner's manual) they are also checked that no past owner has opened up the jets, reduced the needles or increased the slide cutaway(s).

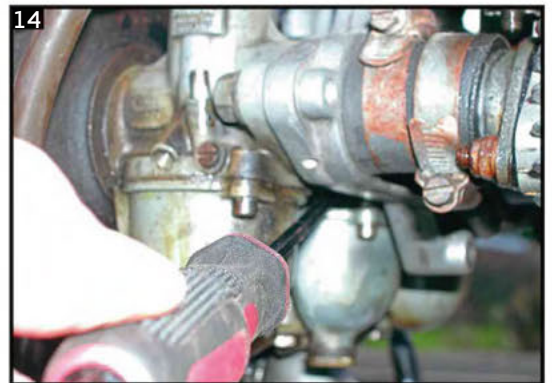
Carburettor(s) are reassembled using a new gasket set, which are available for most post-1930 mainstream carburetors such as Amal, Bing, Dell'Orto etc. For earlier or rare instruments, it is a case of making gaskets and rummaging through the fibre washer box.

In the case of the Triumph Trident/BSA Rocket 3 demonstration, the three Concentric carburetors are reassembled on their manifold. This connects to the machine's cylinder head stubs with appropriate rubber hoses secured at both ends with clips.

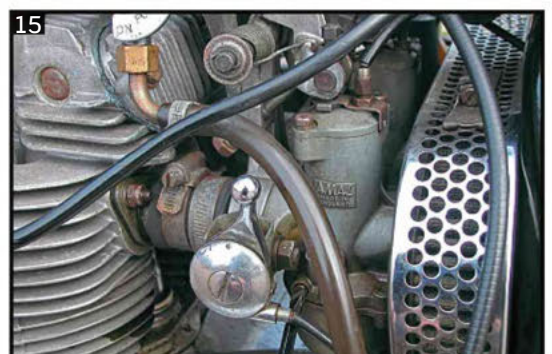
Before the manifold holding the three carburetors is refitted to the engine, the throttle valves (slides in the photo captions) and linkage are synchronised. The object is to have the slides work in unison and



13



14



15

13 14 15

Next stage is to final adjust air screws. Photographs demonstrate screwdriver positioning and access to air screws – easy for outer carburetors, as the air screws are handed to left and right as appropriate, but the centre, accessed from the right, is less than easy. As was getting the camera to focus on the air screw rather than the screwdriver handle! Hopefully the poor picture helps...



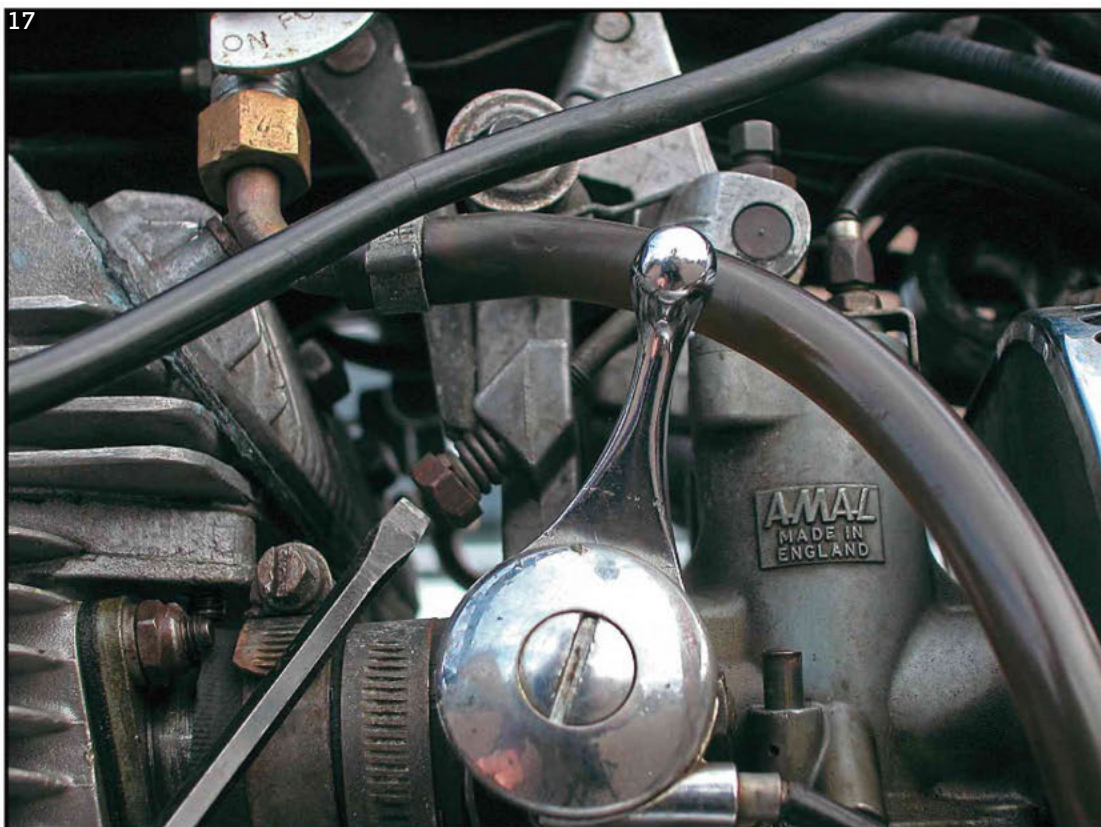
17

With machine warmed-up, adjust the running engine to a fast tickover using the triple carburettors' linkage throttle stop. Views vary – I prefer circa 1200 to 1400rpm, others slower or faster. With the engine running evenly at a fixed speed, final adjustment of the airscrews can get underway.

18

Conveniently, this 1975 Triumph Trident has a rev counter showing the engine is running at a steady 1400rpm. If no rev counter is fitted, one can either tune by ear to listen for increases or decreases in engine speed, or use an electronic device clipped to a plug lead, for example.

17



▶ at any throttle setting all three slides are at precisely the same height within their carburettor bodies. The demonstration with this feature assumes one doesn't have access to appropriate vacuum gauge sets. These will arguably give even better synchronisation but they are not easy to use with upright engine Tridents, due to space limitations, even though the airbox is removed.

■ Before refitting the manifold and carburettors to the machine, the airscrew of each carb is 'first' set by counting threads. While I'll often advise a 'first' airscrew setting of 1½ turns from seated for many instances, the advice for Concentrics fitted to the Triumph Trident/BSA Rocket 3 is 2½ turns from seated.

■ After refitting the carburettor set to the machine and connecting the linkage and guess setting the linkage throttle stop screw, start the motorcycle and run it for seven to 10 miles to ensure the engine is at working temperature. If you've set the tickover too fast, stop and knock back the setting to a fast tickover, circa 1000-1200rpm. On return, immediately adjust the airscrews as detailed in the photographs.

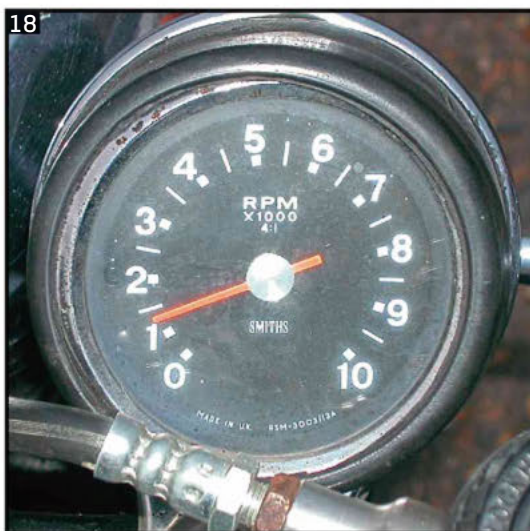
#### Note:

Wear to slides and body will affect the performance of the carburettor and while it is possible by airscrew adjustment to compensate for slight wear, more serious wear will require the instruments to be replaced or to be overhauled by a machinist.

Dependent on the site of wear, this may involve boring the body and re-sleeving the slide to suit or, in some cases, either renewing or re-sleeving the slide may resolve the problem if the carburettor body bore isn't worn.

End

18



19



19

Slowly adjust airscrew in and out while watching/listening for increases or decreases in engine speed. Set at optimum. Even with a triple, improvements to airscrew adjustment to just one cylinder will result in some increase/decrease in engine speed, though it is not as noticeable as carrying out the tuning to a twin carburettor, twin cylinder engine. Visible here is an improvement of approximately 200rpm after tuning one cylinder of the Trident. In effect, the engine is now running unevenly to a degree. Slow engine speed with throttle stop to chosen fast idle and tune second cylinder and then third. Sequence order is up to you – I work right to left. Finally, slow engine to normal idle speed. While researching this feature it was noted that one independent manual recommended 500rpm! Not sure how many triples will run that slowly. We tend to set ours at about 1000-1100rpm – we don't do much town work, so the machine is seldom at idle for long.





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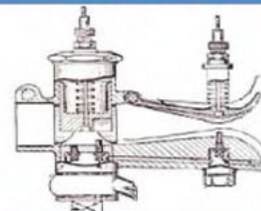
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# Just in time for Christmas



Words:  
MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH  
Photograph:  
MORTONS ARCHIVE

In this photograph from the first week of December 1955, we see the managing director of James Motorcycles Ltd, Mr Charles H Summerton, sat astride a very special J15 Cadet. This Cadet was the first of the new J15 models to roll off the production line, and it was Mr Summerton's job to take it out for a test ride.

He is seen chatting to production manager Walter Jones, assembly shop foreman George Dunn and director of James's parent company, AMC, John Kelleher, just before he takes the new Cadet out for a spin.

The J15 Cadet was brought in as a replacement for the older J5 model, though

the only significant change was the 147cc 30C Villiers engine in place of the 13D engine that had starred in the J5.

The James motorcycle concern was well known and well liked for its expertise in the lightweight market, making lightweights since the Second World War. At that time the company's ML (Military Lightweight) model – fondly nicknamed 'the clockwork mouse' – was popular with paratroops as it was light enough to be lifted over most obstacles.

The Cadet had been available in various guises since its initial introduction. Most variations of the Cadet, including the first rigid-framed model, were made available in both Standard and Deluxe models

to increase their appeal. In later years it was even possible to buy a Cadet in Competition trim.

One of the most important years for the Cadet was 1953. The Standard and Competition Cadets – which had Villiers 10D engines – were dropped from the roster, and the Deluxe Cadet was rebranded as the J6. The J6 was joined by the Villiers 13D-engined J5 which, as mentioned previously, was superseded in 1955 by the J15.

Later years saw James start using more AMC engines in place of their favoured Villiers power units but, like many of its peers, its days were numbered and James eventually became defunct in 1966.

End



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